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AN:

THE PURITAN:

A SERIES OF ESSAYS,

CRITICAL, MORAL, AND MISCELLANEOUS.

BY JOHN OLDBUG, Esq.

Ecce Somniator venit!

Vulgate, *Gen.* xxxvii. 19.

VOL. I.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY PERKINS & MARVIN.
PHILADELPHIA:
HENRY PERKINS.

1836.

PREFACE.

The critics have been very much perplexed to know the design and connection of the ninth eclogue of Virgil. Some of the lines are exquisite; but, like a heap of flowers, they seem to be thrown together without order or sequence. I think I know the secret; and I have discovered it by being in somewhat of a similar condition to that of the great poet. The case was, that he had on his note-book a collection of splendid fragments; lines, which he had laid by, partly translated and partly original, to be worked into some of his more elaborate poems; but not finding a convenient place for them, and believing that they were too good to be thrown away, he was driven to the awkward expedient of telling the story of a poet, turned from his home, who sung *these* lines and *those; this* fragment and *that;* and thus he found a string to tie his discordant flowers together. Such was the expedient which Virgil invented, to introduce unity into the midst of variety.

Will poor John Oldbug violate the laws of modesty, if he should hint a comparison between himself and the first of poets? The resemblance, after all, is only in an

accidental circumstance. For nearly thirty years, the writer of these volumes has been the anonymous correspondent of diverse newspapers, reviews, medleys, and magazines. He has written a great many pieces, which have always been read and admired by *one* reader at least; and to him, it must be confessed, they seemed too good to be lost. Some of them were the production of juvenile vivacity; some the reflections of more sober age. All of them were the random strokes of one, who was a volunteer in the literary corps. My object was to collect these forsaken plants, scattered along the past path of my life, and present them to the reader's mercy, in one basket of summer fruit.

In doing this, I have attempted to weave my fragments into something of a uniform piece; and herein I suppose myself to resemble Virgil in the fore-mentioned eclogue. It would be vanity indeed, to pretend that my tessalated pavement is as beautiful as his; but I trust it is no great arrogance to claim for it as much art in union of design, as is found in his patchwork song.

It has always seemed to me one of the most enviable powers in an author, to hang the solidities of wisdom behind a gauze work of sportive figures, wrought by fancy, and, through the medium of the reader's fancy, making their way more effectually to the heart. This is not so easy a task as some imagine. I will find you twenty men, who will write systems of metaphysics, over which the world shall yawn, and doze, and sleep, and pronounce their authors oracles of wisdom; for one that can trifle like Shakspeare, and teach the truest philosophy, even when he seems to trifle most. The influence

of literature on youthful minds is immense; and the fault of the Butlers, the Congreves, the Swifts, the Fieldings, the Smollets, the Sterns of the writing world, is not that they surrounded the fruits of their principles with the richest blossoms of their wit; but it was, too often, that their principles were wrong. What a world should we have had, had genius poured its combined power in one good direction!

In these volumes, I have attempted a difficult task; and if I shall be pronounced to have failed, I shall neither be grieved nor surprised. I have attempted to remember, in every page, that I am an American; and to write to the wants and manners of just such a people as those among whom I was born. I have always blamed our authors, for forgetting the woods, the vales, the hills and streams, the manners and minds, among which their earliest impressions were received, and their first and most innocent hours were passed. A sprig of white-weed, raised in our own soil, should be more sweet than the marjoram of Idalian bowers; and the screaking of the night-hawk's wings, as he stoops in our evening sky, should make better melody in our ears than the softest warblings of a foreign nightingale. If I have sometimes verged to too much homeliness and simplicity, my only apology is, in the language of Scripture—*I dwell among mine own people.*

There is one species of writing, which vast numbers of readers do not understand enough to see its object, or relish its beauty. I allude to that kind of instruction which comes from *picturing;* MORAL PICTURING, where the lesson is not direct but oblique. I was once sitting

by an evening fire, with a young lady of respectable talents, and fond of books, who was reading the Spectator. She broke out into an expression of astonishment—What a silly book the Spectator is! "Let me see," said I. "What is the passage which appears so foolish?" She was reading the 475th number; a pretended letter from a young lady to the author, of this import. "Now, Sir, the thing is this: Mr. Shapely is the prettiest gentleman about town. He is very tall, but not too tall, neither. He dances like an angel. His mouth is made, I don't know how, but it is the prettiest mouth I ever saw in my life. He is always laughing, for he has an infinite deal of wit. If you did but see how he rolls his stockings!" &c. This was the folly. I asked the lady if it was not an admirable imitation of just the manner in which such a character would write. The question seemed to open a new world to her thoughts; and she was obliged to confess that what she had censured as folly, was one of the most exquisite efforts of genius.

What I have done in these pages I pretend not to say; I only know what I have endeavored. Go, little book, and if thou art found innocently amusing, or sometimes instructive—*live;* but if critics condemn, and the world ratifies their sentence, DIE; and thy humbled sire will drop no tear on thy grave, though for thee there should be no resurrection.

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THE PURITAN.

No. 1.

So when a smooth expanse receives imprest,
Calm nature's image on its watery breast,
Down bend the banks, the trees depending grow,
And skies beneath with answering colors glow;
But if a stone the gentle sea divide,
Swift rising circles curl on every side,
And glimmering fragments of a broken sun,
Banks, trees and skies in thick disorder run.

Parnel.

I SUPPOSE that all my readers have seen that loveliest object in creation, described in my motto. If ever they have been out to Jamaica Plain, or taken a ride to Fresh Pond, in calm weather, they must have remarked the quivering landscape of the nether world, which poets have so often pictured, and from which moralists and philosophers have so often derived their descriptions and images. *There* is found a fairer world, adorned with milder colors, and tinged with a softer light. No night obscures or storms disturb it. It seems built for the imagination;

and I have heard of a disappointed lover, who chose such a scene to drown himself in, as the most agreeable mode of committing suicide. The hills, the vallies, the trees, the earth, and the sky, seem to float in fairy vision before the inspection of the delighted spectator; and yet like all other earthly objects, eminently fair, its beauty is founded partly on delusion. This pictured world is always tranquil, because a storm can never *disturb* without completely *destroying* it.

Although this beautiful image has long been hackneyed by poets and other pilfering writers, yet there is one use I do not remember to have seen made of it. We shall find, if we examine, that a smooth expanse of waters always represents the scenery actually around it, so that it is a lively instance of *reflection*, borrowing her beauties from local nature. A loch in Scotland can never represent the banks of a pond in America, any more than it can roll the waves of our Lake Superior. The waters of all countries are at least original; whether they return from their bosoms the peaks of some barren mount, the arid wastes of Palestine, the steppes of central Asia, or, frozen by a northern winter, the stars of a polar night. Such are the Lakes; and such should be the poets and moral writers of every tongue and people. Such *must* be the character of all those pages, which are destined to last, because they are felt to profit and to please. It is the writer, who

takes his scenes and characters, his incidents and images, fresh from life; and life as modified in his own land, that will attract readers by mixing the useful with the sweet. O, I should have no doubt that my book would float to a literary immortality, if I could only make it as original as the waters of our Lakes!

When an author invites the attention of the reader, his first duty seems to be, to afford some proof that he is competent to the subject. I have styled myself a Puritan; and my readers may fairly ask me what title I have to that venerable name. Had I called myself a Greek, it had been sufficient, perhaps, to bring some document that I was born in sight of Hymettus, and had tinctured my lips with the honey of its classical bees; but to be born in New England, will hardly be allowed sufficient, to entitle one to the appellation of a full-blooded Puritan. Such is the influx of foreigners on our native soil; such the innovations of time, that our primitive manners are fast fading away. I will give some account of my descent, by which it will appear that my name is not an usurpation. I am a Puritan of the straightest sect.

I was born of a line of ancestors, who came over from England in 1640, and were immediately made freemen of the country. Whether my grandfather, or great grandfather, prefixed to his name a *good man* or a *Mr.*, I am not able to say; but I have often

heard my father boast that none of our race ever got into the general court or the workhouse, which he considers as the Scylla and Charybdis of modern society. If they escaped the laurels of political life, they sunk to no inexpiable disgrace. We all trod the middle path; that very condition which all wise men, since the days of Horace, have considered as the *golden mean.* Two of my progenitors, I believe, were selectmen; one was a deacon, and one a ruling elder in the church. I do not mention this to boast of my high family, for I abhor vanity; but it seems necessary to give weight to my speculations. They all devoutly believed the Assembly's Catechism; and were acquainted with painting and the fine arts, enough to have contemplated with devout admiration, the burning of Mr. John Rogers in the New England Primer; and they abhorred the tyranny that brought that good man to the stake. They were perfectly initiated into the mysteries of Hoder's arithmetic; and had passed regularly through the then prevalent grades of learning; that is, they had gone from the Primer to the Psalter, and from the Psalter to the Testament, and from the Testament to the book where all this elementary wisdom was combined—*the Bible.* My great grandfather had an income of about four hundred pounds a year, *old tenor.* My ancestors were chiefly ploughmen, cultivating their own free-hold; and in certain legal instruments which I have seen, some were called cordwainers, some yeo-

men, and one of them bore the title of gentleman. I remember in looking over some old leases between my grandfather and his elder brother, my boyish indignation was greatly moved, on finding my grandfather called a *yeoman*, and my great uncle a *gentleman*. I set myself to inquire what made this distinction in the family. I found that the elder brother had received a commission from Governor Hutchinson to command a militia company; had actually spoken to that great man, as he passed by his house, in his gubernatorial chariot, most respectfully taking off his hat and bowing to the ground; and was consequently entitled to be considered as a born gentleman ever after. But I must confess the captain was not my grandfather; he was only my great uncle; and, as the Scripture says, I would not *exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.*

I was educated in the house of my grandfather. —Dear, dear spot, how art thou imprinted on my memory! how closely is every weed around that old cellar, entwined around my heart! I see the place, the dear, sacred abode; it rises in vision; it rolls back the flood of years; it rebuilds the dilapidated edifice, and recalls to life the departed dead; it places before me, in the eye of imagination, the scenes in which I sported so freely, and which I loved so well. There is the old mansion, with every story jutting out, contrary to all the rules of modern

architecture, wider at the top than at the foundation; there is the tall well-pole, rising towards the sky, with a good quantity of old iron on the farther end, to balance the bucket when full of water; there is the pear-tree, with the huge grindstone under it; there is the meadow, with its maple grove, from whose recesses on some summer evening, I used to hear the Whippowil; the sun-dial, the pasture, the great rock, the barberry bushes, the lilacs, the sprigs of mullen and elecampane, all, all are present to the mental eye, and are seen through the mist of years with a deeper interest than ever. If the reader will step in with me into the house, I will show him the *best room*, with its homemade carpet, carefully woven with strips of cloth, in which the red, blue, and yellow, are nicely adjusted to produce the best effect. I will show him the kitchen, with its vast fireplace, an apartment in itself, collected in which the family was wont to huddle in a cold winter evening, to hear stories of olden time. I can show him the red dresser, with its well-scoured platters, made of pewter, but bright as silver, lessening in rows one above the other. I can present him with a family Bible, bound in buff leather, and printed at Oxford by his Majesty's special command. I can show him the old worn hourglass, standing in two leather loops on a shelf above the fireplace, which my grandfather used to turn exactly at eight o'clock in the evening, that we might be sure to go to bed duly at nine. I can show

him—but alas! the winds of heaven have long since swept away the last mouldering beam of that sacred abode, and before its domestic altar, the white-headed saint will never pray again.

My grandfather had a little library; but it was a Puritan library. Shakspeare and Ben Jonson found no place among his books. I doubt whether, reader as he was, and immortal as are their works, he had ever heard of their names. There were no Homers nor Horaces among his volumes; for he knew no language but his mother tongue. His library consisted of Mr. Flavel's works, Bunyan's Grace Abounding, Alleine's Alarm, and Baxter's Call to the Unconverted. Nor was poetry wholly left out. He had Sternhold's and Hopkins's Psalms, and Dr. Watts's Lyric Poems, two books not to be named the same day. But there was one volume sweeter than all the rest, which stole many a weary hour from my life, and banished all care from my heart. I read it and was happy; I remembered it and was happy; I dreamt of it and was happy; and to this hour, delight and improvement seem stamped on every page. My grandfather always said it was the *next* book to the Bible; but I must own I was wicked enough to think it somewhat better. It was the Pilgrim's Progress from this world to that which is to come, delivered under the similitude of a dream. By John Bunyan. I should have no doubt of my final salvation, if I could tread the real path to Zion,

in faith and obedience, as often and with as much delight, as I have trodden the allegorical one in fancy and imagination.

Such were the scenes in which I grew up; *so the foundations of my mind were laid.* As Sancho boasted that all his family were old Christians, that is, Spaniards without any mixture of Moorish blood; so may I say that I am descended maternally and paternally from genuine Puritans. This is the true nobility of New England. I nursed Puritan milk, drew Puritanical air, read Puritanical books, received Puritanical doctrines, was formed amidst Puritanical manners, and, when I go to the grave, shall sleep in the recesses which inclose Puritanical dust, until the morning of the resurrection. Have I not then some reason to call myself THE PURITAN? But I see the shade of Arrogance pass before me, and I must stop—

> For search, and you shall find humility
> Is best for you, O reader, and for me;
> And so may heaven rain it much upon
> The sinful souls of this generation.

THE PURITAN.

No. 2.

His pen is taken from a bird of light,
Addicted to a swift and lofty flight.
Nicholas Noyes to Cotton Mather.

Though my grandfather's library was very small, and confined to a few books of a theological cast, yet I shall always remember with gratitude, that, in the town of Bundleborough, there was a social library, selected by the worthies of the place, in which my grandfather owned a share. Here I first met with the Spectator; and it was one of the first books which strongly arrested my attention. Criticism with me is a very simple affair. Whatever powerfully impresses my heart, and cleaves to my memory, I pronounce good, without stopping to inquire on what principles it pleases, or by what rules it is written. Addison is not merely the painter of manners; he draws his characters and observations often from the depths of the heart. Though some have seen fit to

represent him as a secondary writer, tame and inefficient, compared with the great masters of our passions, yet I must conceive that he has some of the same witchery of genius, which is found in John Bunyan. I would not say that John Bunyan is equal to Addison, but I would say that Addison is sometimes equal to John Bunyan. I judge from youthful impressions; and I must say that the vision of Mirza, with its enchanted rock, its musical shepherd, its great valley and rolling flood, excited, in my mind, some of those mystic feelings with which I accompanied the harassed pilgrim, in his journey from this world to that which is to come. Every one must allow, I think, that some of his characters for satire, are drawn with the same spirit as that which formed a *Talkative* or *By-ends*. In short, Addison, playful and gentle as he is, sometimes takes the highest flights of genius; and has diversified his pictures of life with wonderful truth and boundless fertility of invention. It would be impossible to crown the urn of Shakspeare with a single flower which would not throw its fragrance around the tomb of Addison.*

There cannot also be imagined a more agreeable mode of writing, than that which was adopted by him

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* That is, so far as describing life and manners is concerned. Addison, in his poetry or prose, has very little of that gilding fancy, that witchcraft of diction, which, in Shakspeare's creative garden, *tips with silver all the fruit tree tops*.

and his associates. By whom the method of publishing in short papers was invented, I am not able to say; it lies, I believe, between Steele and Addison. But every wise man knows that the great secret of profiting mankind is, to gain their attention, to reach their understanding through their curiosity, their amusement, or their passions. In ancient times this was done by the drama, and sometimes by the voice of the popular orator. But the drama exaggerates, and a popular orator is not the production of every century. Those little papers, those short, lively representations, which Addison has invented or used, are like the invisible seeds, scattered by the summer winds; they fly everywhere, and bear fruit in the remotest corners of the earth.

The Spectator is one of the books faithful to nature; but it certainly presents us nature in a local and peculiar dress. Its moral representations may be compared to the plates or pictures, which sometimes accompany the older editions. The persons have the shape, features, eyes, noses of other human beings, in all ages and all parts of the globe. But they are somewhat disguised, (at least to a modern reader,) by the hooped petticoats and flowing wigs of the age of queen Anne. The manners of old England and New England are different. We have here no titled aristocracy; no married woman enjoying a jointure; no fashionable coquette stipulating for pin-money; no beaux rolling in chariots, or wearing a

bag wig, with a golden hilted sword. Our comparatively rich man has not a troop of tenants, who bow in double ranks to his worship as he leaves the church, and receive his hams and plum-porridge on the Christmas holydays. The middle ranks of life present a class of people very different from what is known or imagined in England. Now, though a beautiful statue, in a gothic dress, may still present the great outlines of nature, yet somewhat incumbered by these out-dated accompaniments, so, it seems, the most faithful exhibitions of human life, lose some of their beauty to please, and power to instruct, by being disguised in a system of obsolete and unknown manners. This, to be sure, is no fault of the author, but it is the misfortune of the book.

I am not sure that this foreign dress in the picture presented, does not diminish the moral effect. Every man's duty in part arises from his station; and that may be moderation and frugality in an English nobleman, which would be pride and profusion in a Yankee farmer. Besides, there is an aspiring after imaginary grandeur; an apish attempt to mimic impossible modes of life, which springs up unconsciously in their minds, who fasten their attention more on the drapery than the essential figure. "La!" said a lady in Connecticut to one of her companions, after reading a British novel, well sprinkled over with personages from high life, "I have been so long conversing with duchesses and marquises, that it

seems quite an act of condescension to speak to you." This speech, to be sure, was made half ludicrously, but it paints the heart.

Even some of the characters drawn in the Spectator, are not the original productions of nature, though they are polished monuments of the nice observation and boundless genius of the author. The truth is, there are *two* classes of characters before us in the living world—primary and secondary characters; those who act from the eternal principles of nature, and those who act from nature modified by station, by fortune, by accident, by place or time. Nay, both these ingredients are sometimes blended in the same man. Cromwell, for instance, must have been a dissembler and an ambitious man in all ages and places; but it was only in his own time, that he could have wept before he deceived, and prayed amidst his carnage. It is the business of an author to describe the world as it lies before him; to paint both these forms —the superficial manners and secret natures of men. It is no reproach to Addison, that he does not always dive into the depths of nature, for the lineaments of the heart. He has mixed, as he ought to have done, the *transient* and *permanent* in one variegated piece. I remember that the author of the *Peep at the Pilgrims*, has attempted to make Peregrine White, a kind of Will Wimble. But in New England, Will Wimble would be an impossible character. We

may have just such hearts, but we want the manners which shape them to their last result. We may have just such water in our rivers, as flowed in the *Nahr Ibrahim;* but we want the red ochre in our tinctured soil, which converted its mirific streams into the blood of Adonis.

The truth is, New England is inhabited by a rising people, with manners as rough as their native rocks, but with hearts comparatively as pure as their inland streams. Every man here has been the artificer of his own fortune. We have but few gentlemen among us, if to that word we are to attach the European idea. The revolutionary war, which called away all the pensioners of the crown, such as the Hutchinsons, the Olivers, and the Jacksons, effectually sifted the land of all such pageants, and left us the instruments of republican simplicity. It is evident that such a people must form their manners on their own exigencies. As there are plants on our soil whose hue and fragrance are unknown to Great Britain; as there are winds which sweep over our mountains more cold and more bracing than the gales of Cornwall or Somersetshire, so, I believe, there are characters and modes of life, which some native author might describe with effect. We wish to hold up a little pocket mirror to a very humble scene. Leaving to our mother land their crowns and coronets, their titles and honors, let us describe our deacons and

our cornfields, our rugged mountains and our native streams, our liberty and its excesses, our faults and follies, our virtue and happiness.

> In fair Columbia's realms, how changed the plan;
> Where all things bloom, but, first of all things, man!
> Lord of himself, the independent swain,
> Sees no superior stalk the happy plain:
> His house, his herd, his harvest, all his own,
> His farm a kingdom, and his chair a throne.
>
> *Dwight's Epistle to Humphreys.*

P. S. The reader will perceive that in speaking of the Spectator, I have said very little of Steele—all its glory belongs to Addison. Well might the former have treated the latter with all the servility of friendship; for his leader bore him on his more powerful wing; and notwithstanding what has been said of his pathos, if Addison had not existed, Steele would never have been known; the difference between them was almost as great as that between Johnson and Boswell.

THE PURITAN.

No. 3.

Let historians give the detail of our charters, the succession of our several governors and of their administrations; of our political struggles and of the foundatian of our towns: let annalists amuse themselves with collecting anecdotes of the establishment of our modern provinces: eagles soar high—I a feebler bird, cheerfully content myself with skipping from bush to bush, and living on insignificant insects.

Farmer's Letters.

In the town of Bundleborough I have already remarked, there was a well selected social library, containing some of the most approved books of European authors. In my youthful days, America had made but little progress towards acquiring a literature of her own. Wigglesworth's *Day of Doom*, and the rebusses and anagrams of Mather's Magnalia, comprised about all the poetry of native growth that was found in my grandfather's library. But the social library supplied the deficiencies of the domestic one; and indeed contained some books, which, I have often wondered how my grandfather, strict as he was

in his own theological principles, could admit among his inmates. There was one book, which had a most disastrous influence on my dear aunt Hannah. It was Sir Charles Grandison. I verily believe that Harriet Byron's matrimonial felicity, made my aunt an old maid.

Hannah Oldbug was already verging to some of her latest blooms, when my earliest recollections are associated with her fate. I shall never forget her kindness to me—how she used to hear me say all Dr. Watts's hymns for children before retiring to bed—make me a *turnover* every Thanksgiving day—tie the little black ribbon around my Sunday-collar, before I went to meeting—comb my head before I went to school, and perform all the offices of a watchful and affectionate mother. She had one of the warmest hearts that ever beat beneath a female bosom; and, had she been left to the influence of her Bible and catechism, she might have lived and died contented and in peace. But she had a heart too susceptible to be exposed with safety to the fires of overwrought genius; and Richardson, I suspect, who, in his grave will always continue to speak, robbed her of her lover and her mental tranquillity. It is for this reason I have always had (except in one short interval of my life) a mortal aversion to long winded novels; I could never afford to cry over more than ten pages at a sitting.

I shall never forget the day when I was packed off

to the library with four books bound up in a checked handkerchief, and directed, with a solemn air of secrecy, to ask, together with Baxter's Saint's Rest and the Practice of Piety, for the first volume of the History of Sir Charles Grandison and the Hon. Miss Harriet Byron, and to say nothing to grandpa' about it. Who Sir Charles Grandison was, whether he was a pirate or a robber, and how a woman could have the title of Honorable, were mysteries of which I had no more conception, than of Hebrew or Arabic. However, I obeyed my orders, brought home the book, delivered it to my aunt Hannah, and found she read it more intently than the Bible itself. The first volume brought the second, and the second the third; and my poor aunt, though her cheese-press remained unscrewed, and her churn stood still, never left reading until she got through those interminable pages. As Othello says, "the work did oft beguile her of her tears;" it was the first time I ever saw her or any body else weep over a book; and I was astonished like Tony Lumkin, when she told me, she *liked the book the better, the more it made her cry.* Oft has it happened to us, that I sat on one end of the great meal-chest and she on the other, each with the favorite author in hand—my hair rising with horror, as I accompanied my poor persecuted pilgrim through the valley of the shadow of death, to giant Despair's castle; and she, pouring out her eye water over the sorrows of lady Clementina. I shall never

forget the speech she made when she bade me carry back the last volume (the twentieth I believe.) "Dear, dear Sir Charles Grandison! How soon are these short volumes finished! Why are there no such men now-a-days?"

I ought to have mentioned before, that my aunt had for some time been courted by Robert Crane, the son of old Col. Crane, whose house stood on the other side of the great fresh meadow, which lay before my grandfather's door. Robert Crane was a bachelor of about thirty-five, who went to meeting and went to mill in the proper time, and with about the same emotions; he had been incited to seek him a wife, by the death of his mother; and I must confess, he was not a lover for a maiden's heart to repose on, who had been feasting her imagination with the *perfections* of Sir Charles Grandison. He used to shave himself uniformly once a week; he wore a large pair of mixed blue stockings, drawn in wrinkles over his trowsers; his coat was a homespun drab, with very large buttons, the two waist buttons behind set wide apart; his hair was braided and clubbed behind and tied with an eel-skin. He had an exceedingly hard hand, and, I believe, a very honest heart. Such was the lover, whose prudence or passion had been smitten by the charms of Miss Hannah Oldbug, daughter of Deacon Oldbug, and aunt to me, John Oldbug, the writer of this veracious volume.

My aunt Hannah had been pretty faithful to this

redoubtable beau; and all the town believed that they were soon to be married. The young men were waiting for the *publishment-treat*, and the young ladies were beginning to talk with my aunt about her wedding cake, when unluckily another accident happened, in addition to the reading of Sir Charles Grandison, to infuse jealousy into a heart where love itself had hardly entered before. There moved into our village, a Scotch schoolmaster, who taught one of our public schools, and boarded at the house next to my grandfather's. He was a short, chubbed man, with gray eyes, hazel hair, round cheeks rather inclined to the red, large calves to his legs, and a voice with a foreign accent, yet clear enough to be well understood. His dress was rather aristocratic; he wore a ruffled shirt, sometimes ruffles on his wrists, a crimson velvet waistcoat, trimmed with gold lace; and he had on his hand a ring with a stone in it, which, if not a diamond, shone almost as bright. Of all self-praisers he was the most skilful I ever knew. He would mention in the most incidental manner imaginable, some of the great men or families in the *Old Country*, to which he was related; he would weave into an anecdote some of his own sayings or exploits in such a way as to seem necessary to the story; and all with such an air of non-chalance, that we began to regard him as a superior being, graced with *all the blood of all the Howards*. He never seemed to be boasting; and yet none could hear him

talk for five minutes, without seeing that, like a balloon, he constantly went up by his own inflation.

Republicans after all love nobility; and Mr. MacFrail constantly gained on our admiration. He was a frequent visiter at Deacon Oldbug's; and for five Sabbaths in succession, he had been seen walking home from meeting, swinging his snuff-colored cane, and in close confabulation with my aunt Hannah. I was pretty sure there would soon be a racket; and that the fine cane and fine ruffles, aided by Sir Charles Grandison to boot, would be instruments strong enough to eject Robert Crane from his premises in the heart, however much possession may be nine points in the law.

Mr. Crane was very regular in his attendance on my aunt on *courting* nights, which as he commenced on a Tuesday evening after a March town-meeting, (that being the time assigned by our rural beaux to the beginning of their love adventures,) we always expected him as much as the setting sun. It was our custom to sit and chat together until nine o'clock, then my grandfather took down his leather covered Bible, squeezed on his nose his branchless spectacles, washed with copper; read; prayed; and we all retired to sleep; leaving the sedate lovers to those important negotiations, supposed so necessary previous to an expected marriage.

It was the Tuesday evening after my aunt had walked home with the Scotchman for the fifth time,

when Mr. Crane came, as usual, to fulfil the duties of an accepted lover. I saw nothing peculiar on his brow; but impelled by that curiosity which destroyed our mother Eve, but has delighted all her posterity, I resolved to know the utmost of the affair. There stood in my grandfather's kitchen, a long wooden seat, with a high back, called a settle, which supplied the place of a modern sofa. When the family retired, I, pretending at first to go to bed, slipped softly behind this piece of antique furniture, and, covered by an old saddle cloth, resolved for once to play the listener, and partake of a dish of sentimental conversation.

Reader, behold this scene! The firebrands are wasted, flickering to decay. That old butter-boat iron lamp, that hangs from the mantelpiece, gives a very dim and imperfect light. It is late—the gloomy hours drawn on by the dragons of the night. On that settle sits two lovers in the most profound retirement, just seven feet apart, about to commence their most intimate conversation. The flame of the expiring hearth casts a gleam, fitfully, as the poets say, on the great beam and joists which adorn the top of the room, on the well-scoured pewter, on that dresser, and on the gentle tabby cat which sleeps on a soft holder, in yonder corner; while behind the ancient sofa or settle, lies my carcass, curled up in an old saddle cloth, hardly daring to breathe, descending to the disgraceful station of an eaves-dropper for thy ad-

vantage; expecting pleasure from an action for which I ought to have expected a whipping.

The retired lovers sit so long mute, that I began to imagine that courting was like a quaker meeting. At last the gentleman broke the ice; and the following dialogue ensued, which I shall faithfully record.

Robert Crane. Fine weather for fishing.

Aunt Hannah. It is a pity, Sir, you had not improved it for that purpose.

C. I never go a fishing in *weeding* time. We must finish hoeing the six-acre lot, and then for a sail six leagues below the lighthouse.

H. Pray, Sir, what do you bait your hooks with?

C. Clams, to be sure; sometimes with a piece of red baize; red baize is best for mackerel.

H. And suppose you wanted to catch a lady's heart, what would be your bait?

C. I would come to see her every Tuesday night, and sit with her until the cock crew in the morning.

H. And what would you talk about during these precious interviews?

C. Talk! why talk as I have talked to you.

H. Mr. Crane, don't you think there ought to be a sympathy of hearts before one ventures on the indissoluble union?

C. Miss Hannah, what has got into you lately; you talk in such a high-blown style, I cannot follow you. I should think you had swallowed a dictionary.

H. Alas, Mr. Crane, I am afraid I shall never find in you a Grandison.

C. Find in me a grandson! No—nor a grandfather neither. I am just ten years older than you; and you, Miss, are old enough to come to years of discretion. But if you are hinting at any thing, I am willing to be published to-morrow.

H. O odious! hateful! Do you impute such motives to me? No, Sir, I do not think I shall conquer my scruples for these ten years.

C. Ten years! Ha, ha, ha.

H. Tell me seriously, what led you first to pay your *devoirs* to me?

C. Anan?

H. What led you to solicit my hand?

C. Your hand! I never took your hand in my life.

H. Well, if I must speak plain, what led you to make love to me?

C. Do you mean to ask why I asked you to *set up* with me?

H. Yes, if we must use such terms.

C. Because mother was dead, and father was growing old, and the cows wanted milking, and the cream wanted churning, and I wanted a wife.

H. O! I am the most wretched creature under heaven. Death or poverty would be infinitely preferable to such an union.

C. What's the matter, Miss Oldbug; does your head ache?

H. No—my heart bleeds.

C. I see the difficulty; it is that foppish stranger that walked home from meeting with you last Sunday.

H. Well, Mr. Crane, you and I shall never agree, and perhaps——

C. Look ye, Miss Hannah, if so be you are off, I'm off. And——but——however——

Here he started up—took his hat—twisted it for ten minutes in his hand,—strided towards the door—kept his hand ten minutes on the latch; and finally tost his hat over his eyes—went out, shutting the door with a clap, just half way between violence and moderation. 'Twas the last time that Robert Crane darkened the door of Hannah Oldbug. Six weeks after he was married to the widow Fowler, whose six children soon became six stout lads to work on his farm.

I have reason to think that my aunt was really sorry when she found her lover actually gone. I heard her say to be sure, "good riddance to you, Sir," after he had shut the door; but the speech was followed by a sigh too deep to come from any place but some angle in the heart. For several days after, she was seen to be occasionally in tears; but whether they were drawn from her by Robert Crane or Charles Grandison, was a secret I never knew. Soon after

Mr. MacFrail left the town, being dismissed from his school for his excessive severity; the fable of the dog and shadow came to my mind.

> And so aunt Hannah to the grave you went
> Without a husband, very well content
> An old maid for to be; to eat your mess,
> In tidy cares and single blessedness.

THE PURITAN.

No. 4.

O, who hath tasted of thy clemency
In greater measure, or more oft, than I?
My grateful verse thy goodness shall display,
O thou that went'st along in all my way.

George Sandys.

I AM almost ashamed of myself that I have written three papers and have not yet touched on the important subject of religion, the best gift of God; the last hope of forlorn and fallen man. Religion is such an element in Puritanism, that no one, who assumes that name, can possibly neglect it. A Puritan without religion, would be a rose without fragrance, a star without lustre or beauty. It was the pervading principle at Oldbug house; and if I wished to show to the libertine and unbeliever, the gospel in its sweetest developement, I would point him to the life of my grandfather and his affectionate daughter.

It is true they were Calvinists, but without a par-

ticle of that austerity or rigor which has been sometimes imputed to that system. They had never been irritated by opposition, or fretted by controversy; and having heard the Bible and the Catechism delivered by the same traditionary wisdom, and taught by similar maternal lips, I doubt whether they very accurately distinguished the human composition from the divine. Their religion consisted in a deep reverence for God and all his institutions; a hearty love for their fellow-creatures; a humility which controlled the temper; and a faith, which, amidst all its sublime abstractions, governed the life. I am sure if all Calvinists were like *them*, it would be well for mankind if all the world were Calvinists.

Years have passed over my head since I enjoyed their society; and when tossed on the billows of life, and exposed to the temptations of infidelity, the recollection of their meek principles and holy lives has been my surest defence. I am pretty confident, if, at the tender age of boyhood, Voltaire could have been led to bed by my aunt Hannah, or have set out his winter evenings on my grandfather's settle, he never could have been an infidel. No; the recollections of his youth would have been too powerful for the corruptions of his heart.

Since those days, I have turned on the gospel a severer and more scrutinizing eye; and have been led to ask, what is this religion which bands men into parties, which has been the root of some of the

noblest virtues and the cloak of some of the basest crimes; a religion so shadowy, as that scarce two agree in describing its nature; and yet so substantial, as to last for ages, amidst the perishing wreck of superstition and the changing manners of men. It was foretold that Christ should be a *sign spoken against*, and never was prediction more manifestly fulfilled. By all, who think deeply on the subject, he is either detested or adored.

In an old closet beside my grandfather's fireplace, there was a little bundle of rods and rings called *puzzling irons*, which were often delivered to the stranger to exercise his ingenuity, and, at the first trial, it was no slight matter to slip off the rings, and disentangle the complication, to undo the chain and reveal the mystery. It *puzzled* me more than the hardest theory has in Euclid since. But when you were once shown the process, or had found it by your own sagacity, ever after nothing could be more simple and plain. I have been led to inquire whether there is not some such clue to divine truth; some process by which the mind may be led into the interior of the system; and discover, by a simultaneous light, at once powerful and convincing, the doctrines which rectified reason welcomes, and the duties on which the conscience may forever repose.

All ages and countries have had a conception of virtue and vice; of right and wrong; and, since these sublime ideas could not arise from a blind instinct,

we must look for their origin in another source. It cannot be, certainly, that a voluntary being is virtuous, as water is clear, or a nectarine delicious, without thought or intention. Nor do I like, for I can hardly understand, those modes of explaining virtue, by which one abstraction is brought to expound another; as when it is said, virtue is disinterested benevolence, or acting according to the fitness of things, or according to nature or utility, &c. &c., all which seem to me rash attempts to illustrate the plain by the obscure. Such theories communicate no light (to me at least.) Yet virtue is not an empty name; it is the purest ray that darts from heaven to earth to illuminate and beautify the path of man. What then is it? What is the central light, which, like a chandelier in a church, makes virtue plain, and all other objects plain around it.

Now if there be a distinction between a good man and any of the conveniences of nature; for example, between a good intention and a loaf of bread, then it seems necessary that virtue should be the conformity to *some law*. Certain of our ideas are wholly referential; they are not to be understood but by being compared to some pattern or rule from which we at first derived them, and to which they must silently be referred. The idea of magnitude is an example. Virtue is not an impulse, a blind propensity, a thoughtless good nature arising from the milkiness of the blood. But it is a fixed purpose; a formed motive; which con-

trols the native propensities, rather than is controlled by them. But the very word motive, is (not ambiguous, but) a duplicate; it implies a purpose within and an object without; and where will you find the *external* object, but in the requirements of some law? Take away law, and you take away the very conception and being of virtue. Some men may be troublesome, and some fawning or useful, like spaniels or puppies, but all the lofty ideas of duty and obligation are levelled to the dust.

In this view of the subject there are several advantages.

In the first place, it is a most satisfactory analysis, terminating in something which our reason can grasp. When we resolve a complex object into its elements, we wish those elements to be clear, simple, and the simplest objects of knowledge. This analysis is clear in two ways. It carries up to God, (for law implies a law-giver and law-executor,) and shows that the existence of the Deity is the prime truth in religion. In the second place, it resolves virtue, not into a shadowy abstraction, but into a grand fact that God *is*, and God governs the world by a law; and all virtue is obedience to his will. Here we must stop; when we know this, we know all we can know. Obey my voice, is the requisition of Jehovah, and the last element of moral knowledge.

Abandoning this ground, what confusion have some respectable writers introduced into their schemes of

morals! Virtue implies obligation, or in other words virtue is something which we are *obliged* to do. Dr. Paley tells us that to be obliged to do a thing is to be *urged by a powerful motive;* and this he considers as so clear an account of the matter, as to remove some of the mystery which hung over it in his own mind. But what confusion! Obligation, moral obligation, nothing but being urged by a powerful motive!! Does the assassin, who holds a dagger at my breast, to compel me to sign a surreptitious deed, do any thing to lay me under a *moral obligation* to obey him? Surely this is pouring confusion, instead of light, on the whole system of morals. On our system, the nature of obligation is perfectly plain; even a child can understand it. It is part and parcel of the complex notion of law. If one being has a right to make laws, i. e. to command, other beings must be *obliged* to obey them. Obligation is the antithesis of law; they are things which nature has joined together, and no man, no, not even in thought, can put them asunder.

Faith is one of the cardinal Christian graces; and great wonder has been expressed by some infidels, why so capricious and involuntary a principle (as they would call it) should be made the condition of salvation. But the law is invisible; it has no place among all the *tangibles* of sensual life. He that cometh to God, says a sacred writer, must believe that he is, and is the rewarder of such as diligently seek him.

What is this but saying that faith is to *law*, what the optic organ is to light. If so, then to say that a man must have faith to please God, is no more than saying that he must have eyes in order to enjoy the sun.

But the grand advantage of this view, is the light which it throws on that central truth, perplexing to reason, but necessary to religion, the salvation of mankind by an expiatory sacrifice in the death of a Redeemer.

Some of our religionists tell us, and with great apparent sincerity, that it seems to confound their ideas, and disturb their moral apprehensions, to say, that man, though a sinner, should not be forgiven on sincere penitence. Why should he not? This seems to be the most simple arrangement of cause and effect. "We can understand," they say, "that sin should be *demeritorious** in the sight of God; we can understand his displeasure and its punishment; but how salvation should ever be procured by the pangs of another, we cannot understand. It seems to us, no man would have thought so, if his natural ideas had not been disturbed by the figments of theology." These objections doubtless are honest and should be soberly answered.

Meditate then, my friend, on the fact, that all virtue, goodness, holiness, or whatever you call it, must be

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* As I am a Puritan and a Yankee, I shall coin words just when I please.

conformity to a law; without this, virtue has no place; and, in a religious sense, virtue must be conformity to the law of God. Now consider deeply the nature of law. Its force is its justice, its power is in its punishments. If every act of disobedience is pardoned on the plea of penitence, (and the law knows none but general principles,) all guilt is free, (for all will hope to be penitent,) and all government is lost. Nature shows that *something more* is necessary than repentance; what that *something* is, is discovered by revelation.

THE PURITAN.

No. 5.

And certainly discipline is not only the removal of disorder, but, if any visible shape can be given to divine things, the very visible shape and image of virtue, whereby she is not only seen in the regular gestures and motions of her hourly paces as she walks, but also makes the harmony of her voice audible to mortal ears.

Milton against Prelaty. Book I. *ch.* 1.

No idea can be more important than that God governs the world by a law; and from this position, as from a radiant point, emanate all, or nearly all the other truths of religion. He, who has clearly fixed in his mind the idea of God, and his law, the nature and bearing of each on the conscience and conduct of man, has made no small proficiency to the comprehension of the whole subject of revealed religion; and confusion here, spreads confusion over all our subsequent religious inquiries.

It has often been remarked, that all spiritual things are to be understood by comparisons taken from

temporal objects. As we see the sun through his reflected image in the water, so we must discern spiritual things through their faint similitudes found on earth. Hence we speak of God's mode of government, by calling it a law; the expression, however, is liable to mislead us.

We receive our earliest conceptions of law, from civil transactions. All human laws must necessarily be imperfect; and hence we are apt to attach a notion of imperfection to the laws of God. Mankind are so immersed in matter, they are so carnal in their conceptions, so little refined and spiritual in their expectations and desires, that their views are fixed on the implements of happiness, rather than happiness itself. Laws are chiefly employed in regulating property; and it is remarkable that no complex system of legislation was ever invented, until they first began to sow and reap, to measure and till the ground, in other words, to establish a private right in real estate. Hence the poets tell us * that Ceres, the goddess of corn, who first taught men to plough the field, and gave them better food, was the first also who gave them laws; the meaning of which fable is, that the same wisdom, which teaches men to sow the ground, teaches the necessity of protection from law; because

* Prima Ceres unco glebam dimovit aratro:
Prima dedit fruges, alimentaque mitia terris
Prima dedit leges.
Ovid, Meta. Lib. V. *line* 340.

no person would lay out the labor, and wait so long for the recompense, unless he was, under the sanction of the law, morally sure of his reward. No man will cultivate a field until he *owns* it; and if we look narrowly to what we mean by *owning* a field, we shall find it signifies the protection of our rights, by the sanction of the laws.

Hence we find that savages, who have no fields, and no cultivation, have no laws; law being nothing but justice assigning the bounds of material property.

But property is so coarse a concern, such an uncertain channel in conveying happiness, that all laws regulating it must be equally coarse; they must be far removed from the heart. Ascertaining a man's felicity by his property, is like measuring trees by their shadows; and hence all legal operations become very imperfect acts of justice. Property is the great object on which human laws operate; and hence they are as far removed from spiritual precision, as the imparting of property is from communicating real enjoyment.

There is another reason, which serves to degrade the term 'law,' in the apprehensions of mankind; and that is, the decisions of law must be founded on evidence; and evidence we know is imperfect, hard to be found, warped by the interest, and prejudices, and ignorance of those who give it, so that the decisions of a court of law, are sometimes less accurate than the conclusions which a reflecting man can make in his own

closet. Add to all this, the imperfection of the statutes, the comparatively imperfect justice at which they aim, and the imperfect manner in which their very aims are accomplished, the ingenuity which perverts them, the ignorance which misjudges them, with all the management and artifice of a modern tribunal, and you must not wonder if the term law seems a very unsacred name. It hints a thousand imperfections; and a very unlovely view of the Deity arises in some minds, when we are told that God governs the world by a law. They seem to regard it as a very coarse instrument to be placed in the hand of so high and pure a being.

There has been a tendency in all ages, in the minds of men, corrupted by their own passions, to slip down from the first conception of things. Their first bright essence, like a fish taken from the water, looks fair for a moment, and grows fainter the longer they are separated from their original element, until their very nature is changed and all their primitive lustre is lost. Hence we find, that the law given on Sinai, and which was as pure as Infinite Wisdom could make it, degenerated in the hands of such men as the Pharisees, into a rule of conduct which totally separated the action from the heart. Hence St. Paul needed a special influence from God to recover a sight of the law in its real nature. *I was alive,* says he, *without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died; and the commandment which was*

ordained to life, I found to be unto death. So totally had he mistaken the inward, spiritual, vital part of God's law. He was like a man, who stands in the morning with his back to the sun, and knows its rising only by the shadow, which it casts in an opposite direction.

It was the doctrine of the great Plato, that men in this world, with all their carnal senses about them, are like persons who should dwell in the bottom of the sea, and behold the sun and stars through the refracting impediment of the waters. He says, when we shall be disrobed of these imperfect bodies, when our passions are removed, and our senses refined, we shall see the real essences of things. As a man who has looked through a colored glass, sees better when the glass is removed and he uses his natural eyes, so shall we, if we be good men, be assisted when we drop our natural passions, and look with the pure eyes of reason, to see things as they are, with accuracy, with perfection, with truth. This may help to illustrate what I mean by the materialized imperfection with which all men regard the word 'law.' Instead of considering it as the most perfect rule, coming from the most perfect mind, and binding the conscience and reaching the heart; they seem to view it as a balance of dollars and cents; the footing of an account; a process in arithmetic; a thick cord binding the outward man, and with which the inward man has nothing to do. Now you might as well con-

found a pair of balances for casks and packages, and turned by fifty-sixes, with those delicate scales in which the banker weighs his gold.

In opposition to all these mistakes, I maintain, that law is the most pure ethereal idea, which ever passed from spirit to spirits, to regulate their most sacred intercourse with one another.

THE PURITAN.

No. 6.

Most sacred virtue, she of all the rest,
Resembling God in his imperial might,
Whose sovereign powre is herein most exprest,
That both to good and bad he dealeth right,
And all his works with justice hath bedight,
That powre he also doth to princes lend,
And makes them like himself in glorious sight,
To sit in his own seat, his cause to end,
And rule his people right as he doth recommend.

Spenser—Fairy Queen. Book V. *Introduction.*

In order to illustrate the position of the last number, let us consider for a moment the course to which the spirit of the municipal law points. For, although a sign-board is not the picture of the city to which it directs us, nor a measure of the distance which it records, yet its index points the eye of reason to some knowledge at least of both.

In the first place, then, why is it necessary that social man should be under the restraints of law at all? Why must he be bound by obligations, and scared

by punishments, and threatened by the judge, and tormented by the executioner? Why not leave him like the birds, to sport on the common of nature, and reap all the enjoyments to which instinct prompts, restrained by private reason alone? Now this question, human law, with all its imperfection, answers to the satisfaction of every man who looks to consequences. In this nation there are twelve millions of people, and all of them give up that portion of their natural liberty which is necessary for the welfare of the social state. Now, consider the benefits of the bargain. In a state of nature I might have the privilege of snatching what I could find; I might enter the garden of my neighbors, and reap what I had not sowed, and gather where I had not strewed; I might invade any inclosure where my superior strength gave me the ability. But see, others might do the same; if I plunder, I cannot even call my plunder my own. Others will retaliate my injustice on me, and at what immense loss! In a nation of twelve millions, I have twelve millions of chances against me, and now for the immense benefit of stopping twelve millions of aggressors from invading my rights, I give up the solitary privilege of invading theirs. Never was a greater blessing bought at a smaller price. These are the fruits of living under law and government. It spreads order through life, communicates security and happiness; every man sits under his own vine and fig tree, and there is none to molest

or make him afraid. The poor man is as secure of his little, as the rich man of his heaps, and the more perfectly the law is made and executed, the more certain is it, that each man's happiness is bought at a cheaper price.

Just so we shall find it with respect to the influence of the law of God. It commands us, not even to covet our neighbor's wealth. This, like the prohibition of the garden of Eden, imposes one restraint. But, as a recompense, it commands millions of beings, the inhabitants of all worlds, men, angels, cherubim and seraphim, all conscious beings, from the highest archangel down to the meanest subject of God's moral reign, not to covet any thing from us. Most perfect law! the centre of attraction to a boundless universe! It is not more an imperious duty, than man's highest interest, to submit to it, and well might the Psalmist say, *The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice.*

But there is another sense in which human laws may be said to point to, and evince the necessity of, something more perfect. As the ancient philosophers had a notion that material beauty, (as of a rose or rainbow,) was the ladder by which our minds should climb to the conception of intellectual beauty, so we may say that human laws, immersed as they are in regulating the measurement of gold and silver, are still the lower ideas by which we rise to perception of a law, perfect and divine. They put us upon a track,

in which meditating reason finds no stopping place, but in just such regulations as are sanctioned by the law of God. For, let us ask why it is, that the laws guarantee to a man the undisturbed possession of his own property. It is because the security of that property contributes to his happiness. Wealth, imperfect as it is in its power, is still the means and shadow of enjoyment; and as it is a measurable quantity, measurable, I mean, by our coarse instruments, and is grateful to our incarnated tastes, it is the subject about which human laws principally employ themselves. But suppose there were any other thing equally or more the cause and measure of happiness, why should not *that* become the object of law? Some men value their reputation more than their acres, and hence the law takes into consideration reputation. But why should not every instance of injured affection come under the cognizance of law? Why should not ingratitude, wounding the heart like a venomous serpent; why should not cold looks, proud disdain, unmerited contempt, secret malice, unrequited love, the slanderous eye as well as the slanderous tongue, the malice of the heart as well as the murder of the hand, be forbidden by the law, and checked by its penalties. Certainly all human happiness is not contained in material quantities. These invisible injuries, these darts taken from the quiver of the mind, and felt by the mind alone, are just as real and just as painful, as those aggressions which invade

your wealth. They are more so. For only suppose you found a man perishing on a wreck; suppose you relieved him at great hazard; suppose you lavished on him every kindness; and after this, he should turn a deaf ear to your distress, suppose he treats you with the most unfeeling ingratitude, would it not cut you to the heart? So the disobedience of a child, how painful! how agonizing to a parent! and yet none of these things come within the provisions of any statute. Human laws cannot reach them; and the same reasons which exempts them from earthly jurisdiction, shows they must be reserved for a judgment perfect and divine.

The simple reason why they are not noticed by human tribunals, is because they cannot be ascertained. They are such delicate quantities, that no human measure could reach them. How could you prove the amount of ingratitude in a court of law? How could a surgeon be brought on the stand, as a witness, to testify to the depth of a wound in the heart? "There is but one kingdom," says Seneca, "in which a suit is allowed against the ungrateful; it is Macedonia; and there they only prove the folly of the attempt. Because we all agree to prosecute crimes. Of homicide, of poisoning, of parricide, of violated religion, of all these in diverse places, there are different penalties, but every where some. But this most frequent crime of ingratitude is no where punished, and every where reprobated. And why? Not

that we absolve it from censure, but since the estimation of such an uncertain thing is almost impossible, we leave it to the hatred of mankind, and the judgment of Heaven."—De Beneficiis, Lib. III. Sec. 6. This reasoning is correct. Earthly laws are human, and must partake of all the imperfection which belong to the fallible creature man.

There are a few cases, it is true, where the law attempts to estimate the secret injuries of the mind; and these are precisely the most difficult cases on record, and often only serve to show the necessity of something more perfect than human efforts can ever reach. For example, a libel injures a man; but when you come to estimate that injury by damages, the case becomes almost ridiculous; for how many bank bills must you put into a man's purse, to heal the wounds of his bleeding reputation, and how hard it is to know how much his reputation is injured, or how malignant was the intention of the moral aggressor. In all such cases, a man is compelled to carry his thoughts to a higher tribunal; to think of a law, which, emanating from perfection, can be executed by perfection alone.

But when we mount up to a God which can see the heart, who can measure spiritual injuries without deception or mistake, we see at once, that all evil will meet his eye, and demand his sentence. Property, perhaps, ceases with this life. Fields, houses, barns, and implements, must perish in the conflagra-

tion of all temporal things; but hearts, feelings, motives, conscience, love, hatred, joy, and suffering, are eternal essences, and will always be the object of a law which can fasten on them with as much facility as our municipal laws can regulate deeds and leases. If a malignant motive inflicts a lasting injury on the meanest of God's creatures, it is just as much an object of condemnation, as a forgery or a theft is an object of human condemnation, solely because it is an injury. It is the power of inflicting *injury*, that makes property so much the object of law; and the only reason why it so often stops at property, is because the law has little power of discerning injuries beyond the withholding or purloining of property. But only suppose this difficulty overcome, and the influence of law is universal. Imperfect in man, it must rise to perfection, to the highest spirituality, when it becomes a quality in God.

Thus as a dot on paper leads us to conceive of a true mathematical point; as a circle or triangle in diagrams, leads us to something more purely the object of reason than aught we have ever seen; so human laws lead us to allow the necessity and concern of the existence of a law spiritual and divine. If human governments are necessary for a welfare transient and imperfect, a divine government is necessary for a happiness unmingled and eternal. If bodies must be regulated on earth, hearts must be regulated in heaven; if *actions* must be judged in

our courts, *motives* must be weighed at the day of judgment. The tree implies the sap; the shadow, the substance. Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart. *Ye have heard it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill, and, Whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.* So in the case of lust, as well as anger, our Saviour traces the outward and visible streams to its most recondite fountain in the heart.

We are apt to conceive that we are talking of something far more refined and spiritual, when we speak of love, conscience, motive, will, desire, intention, these inmost operations of mind, than when we speak of law, which is associated with all the materialisms of courts, juries, statutes, pleadings, where we see its operations in the most degraded form in which so refined a power can act. But let us not be unjust to the word or the subject. Law, is a word coined in heaven, however degraded by man; it retains some of its ethereal nature even in its coarsest forms. Its objects are not fields and houses, but motives, emotions, purposes, conscience, and the will. It is a mirror, reflecting the glory of God and the duty of man. It is the sublimest object which a purified

mind can contemplate; and I wish to restore this word to its highest meaning, without which religion must be degraded, and the epistles of St. Paul cannot be understood. Remember that all religious knowledge revolves around this one pivot, LAW; the privilege and protection of created beings, and the image and glory of an uncreated God.

THE PURITAN.

No. 7.

See where the smiling day
In darkness melts away,
  Behind the western hills withdrawn;
Its fires are quenched, its beauties fled,
With blushes all its face o'erspread;
As conscious it had ill fulfilled the promise of the dawn.
Another morning soon shall rise,
Another day salute our eyes,
  And make as many promises;
But do not thou, the tale believe;
They're sisters all, and all deceive.

Anonymous.

Can life present a more grateful spectacle than a good man doing good? In the town of Bundleborough, our minister, Dr. Snivelwell, was one of those characters, whose excessive benevolence sometimes prevented him from doing his duty. Wrapt up in his books and neglecting exercise, he was poorly qualified on certain occasions to visit his people. The east wind was too cold, or there was too dark a cloud in

some remote quarter of the sky, for the sensibility of his nerves to encounter the slightest prospects of a storm. He was one of those men who are always *dying of a rose in aromatic pain;* and, though he had real feeling for the sufferings of his people, yet it was a feeling which disqualified him for his pastoral office. In a sick chamber he was a very dunce. I have seen him sit beside the patient's bed, picking a straw in the utmost agitation; shifting one leg over the other; biting his thumb nail; sometimes weeping in dumb astonishment, incapable of leading in devotion or administering advice. Hence a great part of the duty of visiting the sick, devolved upon my grandfather, eldest deacon of the church; and all the serious and dying, thought it a happy accident when they were visited by the substitute rather than the principal.

One morning, when my grandfather had just finished his third cup of souchong tea, there came a message for him to visit a young man apprehended to be dying in a distant part of the town. There was something startling in the very terms; youth and death, are ideas so contrary in all our common trains of thinking, that it is only by a painful example that we can be compelled to yoke them together. I was immediately despatched, with the help of David, to put the old bay horse with a star in his forehead, into a chaise, which rattled as it went, and was so old as to be denominated by the boys, the ark of the

testimony. My grandfather put on his light blue coat, placed in his shoes his square silver buckles, took down his three-cornered beaver, seized his ivory-headed cane, and in ten minutes we were riding as fast as old dobbin would carry us, to the widow Russel's, whose only son was apprehended to be on his dying bed.

It had been so often my lot to drive my grandfather on such expeditions, that perhaps I should have felt little emotion, had I not known young Russel, a few weeks before, blooming in all the promises of youth and expectation. He was the son of a fond mother, who was ready to testify her fondness for her son by the most boundless indulgences. There was a passion in the young lads of Bundleborough, about that time, to cast off their rustic slough, and to go into Boston and polish their manners behind a counter; insomuch that I have seen many a hard hand and brown face, blackened by the dust of a potato field, after a few months' residence with a city shopkeeper, become as soft and as white as a *petit maitre.* They exchanged the honest simplicity of the country, for all the vice and affectation of a town life. I remember my aunt Hannah used to compare them to grub worms changed into butterflies; and what was very wonderful, some parents, sober enough themselves, seemed to rejoice in the transformation.

The widow Russel's house, stood near the burying ground. It was a small white mansion, with a few

willow trees before it; which grew in a little inclosed garden, dedicated to grass and to flowers. As we walked up to the door, the knocker of which was muffled, it seemed to me that the very pinks and daffodils drooped their heads, as if conscious that youth and beauty were approaching the tomb. A profound silence reigned around the mansion; the dust at the gate was worn by the wheels of the physician's sulky, who had turned away his steed for the last time; and nothing now remained, but for the mental physician to minister, if possible, to a mind diseased, and fit a trifling spirit to take its flight to its Maker and its God. As we went in, his mother came with tears in her eyes to request my grandfather to deal gently with her son; to be faithful, to be sure, but not to alarm his spirits with the horrors of his condition. "He must die, I know," said she, "no art can save him. But he is still cherishing foolish hopes of life, and a sudden fright might distract him. O, Sir, save his soul, but do not increase his weakness and accelerate his death."

We entered his chamber, and found him sitting up with several pillows at his back, near the head of his bed; a green silk gown was thrown over his shoulders; his bosom was ruffled with much care, and a shining breastpin held the parts of his well-plaited shirt together; in his hands he held a gold watch, which his fond mother had given him, and on his bed lay an inverted pamphlet, which he had just

been reading, and which on inspecting I found to be the farce called the *Wags of Windsor*. He was excessively pale; his eyes prominent and staring; his breathing already difficult; and he looked like a skeleton dressed out in the fopperies of a beau. I never saw a more ghastly sight.

He started as we entered, as if he saw unexpected guests; but my grandfather with a kind of paternal familiarity approached his bedside, took him by the hand, asked him how he did and how he felt. O, Sir, said he, I am growing better; my mother and friends are somewhat alarmed about me, but I conceive without reason. These last pills which my doctor has left me, will set me on my legs again, and next week I hope to ride out and take the fresh air, and in a fortnight return to my business. For, Sir, I always choose to look on the bright side of things.

Dea. O. And is life the only bright side?

Russel. Yes, Sir, if I were to die, I should be in despair indeed.

Dea. O. Why so?

Russel. Because I have been very wicked. I have no hope beyond the grave; I have no peace of mind.

Dea. O. Well, my young friend, whether you live or die, it is vastly important that your peace be made with God. Tell me, do you believe in his word? Have you confidence in your Bible?

Russel. I *once* had.

Dea. O. And how is it now? Have you lost your compass? Have you lost your path?

Russel. Alas, Sir, the city is a bad place for a youth like me, unfixed in his principles. If you will take this key and unlock yonder trunk, you will find the book that has undone me.

Here, with his pale, trembling hand, he took out the key and sent the old gentleman to a trunk, who went and took out the volume of some infidel, I forgot who. "There, Sir," said he, "there is the false wisdom which lured me in prosperity, and lurches me in my distress. I never told my mother my principles. Pray take the book and throw it into the fire."

"Well," my dear son, said my grandfather, taking him by the hand, "it is never too late to repent, and you certainly now have no time to lose."

Russel. O, Sir, I cannot; it is impossible; my heart is like a rock; I have passed the exclusive line; I am gone forever.

Dea. O. But this is sinful despair; God commands all men every where to repent, and invites all to accept his gospel.

Russel. I wish, Sir, I had strength to tell you my story. There! adjust this pillow; raise my head a little; let me breathe the fresh air; I will try to speak. There was a time when I could not sleep without praying. But when I went to the city, I thought myself another man. Dress, and foppery, and amusement, and, I must say, vice, occupied my

heart. I went to scenes where I would not have had my mother's eye pursue me, indulgent as she is, for all the world. Shall I tell you, Sir, my present sickness is in consequence of my vices; and I bear the secret sting in my body and my soul. I soon joined a club of young men, whose principles conformed to their practices, and we were accustomed to meet on Saturday evening; that once calm evening of preparation; to ridicule our Bible; to blaspheme our Saviour, and to fortify ourselves in our courses. But I am exhausted—I am faint—call in my mother.

Here he sunk, and his distracted mother came rushing into the room, for she thought him dying. "Speak, William, speak," said she, "shall this good man pray for you." "Yes," said he, "pray that I may live; for I cannot—I must not die. Pray that I may live—I am not prepared to go. Pray, pray, pray that I may live."

Here my grandfather kneeled down by his bedside, and took out his white pocket handkerchief, and, while the mother bent over her son, grasping his hand and laving his forehead, he offered a short but fervent prayer. He prayed for his life, to be sure, but he prayed more fervently, I thought, for his repentance. When he had done, the youth lay in a stupor, grasping his mother's hand and already half a corpse. She, with a woman's solicitude to catch some gleam of hope in the last extremity, with a frantic earnestness pressed his hand and said, "Speak,

William, are you resigned to the will of God? If you cannot speak, squeeze my hand. O say that you are willing." But he lay motionless; and so far as I could discern, in the awful language of Shakspeare, *he died and made no sign.*

As we rode home that forenoon, my grandfather seemed lost in meditation. He was a man that never wept, but there was a volume in his face. "John," said he, as we reached the gate, "remember and learn." These pithy words rang in my ears for weeks afterwards; and as I retired that night to my mournful pillow, I could not help saying when alone—*Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.*

THE PURITAN.

No. 8.

O dark, dark, dark amid the blaze of noon,
Irrevocably dark, total eclipse,
Without all hope of day.

Samson Agonistes. 180.

In a shoemaker's shop, in a town not far from Boston, about sixty years ago, worked Samuel Smallcorn, a youth who was placed there by his father, that, under a sponsible master, he might learn a reputable trade. Sam was an honest lad, sometimes easily imposed upon, from the simplicity of his heart, though by no means lacking in understanding. He was rather credulous, because he never wished to impose upon others; and hence, he was the butt of the wit of some of his fellow-apprentices, whose malice, in the law phrase, supplied their years. Sam had been honestly educated—had been taught his catechism, which he could repeat, every word of it, with all the commandments and the *reasons annexed.* He had the highest respect for his father, who was the

worthy representative of a long line of Puritan ancestors. In the same shop worked Phil Blake, who was the suspected son of a very suspicious mother. One day, when Sam was quoting, very innocently, some of the sayings of his father, Blake cut him short, by remarking—

'Your father, Sam, is a sly old fox; he has more blots on his character than you know of.'

'Blots!' said Sam, 'what blots? He is as honest a man as ever trod sole-leather.'

'That may be,' said Blake; 'but, let me tell you, what you never knew before, and what you may as well know now as at any other time—*he has one son that is not your brother.*'

'Impossible!' cried Sam; 'you are joking.'

'No, upon my soul; it is the truth. I should not fear to lay my hand on the Bible, and say—that your *father has one son, that is not your brother.*'

Sam heard the awful assertion, and turned as pale as death. His father! his respected father!—a member of the church, and once having two votes for the office of deacon!—could the venerable old Mr. Smallcorn have an illegitimate son! It was just after breakfast; but the contents of the morning meal did not stay long on Sam's stomach. He was sick of the world; sick of his father; sick of himself; and it seemed to him, as it did to Brutus under the rock, that virtue was an empty name. He worried over the tidings all that day; nor was it, until the shades of

dewy evening came over the earth, that he found out the dreadful amphibology — for Blake asked him, whether 'he himself was brother to himself?' and whether 'he was not his father's son?' Then poor Sam had a second penance to undergo—being laughed at for his credulity.

For my part, I sympathize with poor Sam Smallcorn, and I detest Blake, whom I devoutly hope was brought afterwards to the gallows; for there are cases when credulity is more honorable than unbelief. Indeed, I do not know a phrase, which is more abused than that of 'credulous people.' What is it that makes a man credulous? If, moved by a tale of wo, you give to a being whose form is emaciated and whose eyes are sunk in sorrow, some skeptical old Hunks, who loves his purse better than his conscience, will call you credulous, for hastily believing a false story of misery. If you think it best to part with your gold to spread the purest principles, purer than fined gold, you will be regarded as the dupe of some holy cheats, whose chief design, however, seems to be to cheat mankind into virtue and happiness. Some people seem to have a mortal aversion to any kind of credulity, which lays the least tax on their selfishness, or calls for any benevolent exertion. It is credulous to believe, that the sufferings of the poor are great, or that there are such beings as the poor. It is credulous to believe the Bible; or to suppose, that the Author of nature values the salvation

of men more than the laws of nature. It is credulous to believe, that religion is any thing else than a dream. It is credulous to suppose, that this vast system was made for any purpose, or that the mighty wheels of nature were first created, and are now rolled round, by an invisible hand. It is credulous to imagine, that there is any moral government; any reward for the virtuous, or any future punishment for the most abandoned of mankind. In some people's imagination, conscience is the very organ of credulity; and the only way of being a philosopher, is to suppress its dictates and blunt its sensibilities. To hear some people talk, you would suppose, that to be credulous was the greatest disgrace; and the only way to avoid that imputation, was to reject all the truths around which the pious have gathered, and which Heaven has bound, by the most sacred obligations, on the hopes and fears of mankind.

I remember that Plato, in one of his dialogues, says that there was an order of men, in his day, who rejected spiritual conceptions; and taking hold of rocks, hills, or oaks, or some other material substance, affirmed that these were the only real existences; that no wise man would puzzle himself about any ideas or notions, but such as he could see with his eyes, smell with his nose, or touch with his fingers. Perhaps the peculiar, tenuous and transcendental philosophy of Plato, was calculated to repel opposing sects to opposite extremes; and he who was always

above the clouds, might provoke others to be always grovelling on the ground. But, however this may be, we seem, in these days of innovation, which some call improvement, to be making rapid strides to this blessed system. I was told of a certain bookseller, in a certain city, that often scratches his head and declares that the only work which he fully understands is a treatise on cookery. Another substantial gentleman, who boards at Tremont-house, assures me that, after having long studied Chauncey on the Benevolence of the Deity, he is convinced he never understands the blessings of Heaven so well as when they descend before him in the shape of a plum-pudding. One man tells me, that even his eye is almost too spiritual an organ for him to trust to; he is not sure of the existence of an object of sight, especially if he sees it at a distance. Of all spiritual objects, he is most sure of the being and happy influence of a good glass of gin, when he feels it warming his stomach.

An infidel is too incredulous to believe the gospel; and, having laid up whatever stock of merit is to be gained by rejecting the Bible, he thinks he is going full sail, down the seven streams of the river of Wisdom. He congratulates himself, that, whatever else the world may say of him, they cannot accuse him of being a gull or a hypocrite. But, my dear sir, do you not see that every proposition has two sides to it, and that credulity consists in believing that side which

has the least evidence? Believing a negative, always implies a hearty faith in all the positive proofs, which support that negative, and the rejection of all the evidence on the other side. You cannot believe in Christianity; but you can believe, that life is without an aim, and death without consequences; you can believe, that such a character as that of Jesus Christ (which even commanded the admiration of Rousseau) was drawn at random; you can believe, that apostles and martyrs conspired to deceive mankind, though their lot was poverty and their reward death. You can believe, that all that has animated the hopes of the saint, cheered his prison with consolation, and strewed his pillow with immortal roses, was delusion; you can rejoice in a discovery, which makes life a blank, and leaves man little better than a two-legged beast. You can believe, that the Son of God was an impostor, and Bolingbroke and Tom Paine were the benefactors of mankind.* I confess, that such philosophy is too credulous for me.

But, it is not merely in what he rejects, that the infidel's credulity appears. When a man abandons the word of God, it is almost always the case, that some strong delusion is sent into his mind, which makes him infamous on his own system. It would be a laughable catalogue enough, to collect all the

* Yes, though the one raced with his naked harlots, and the other loved his bottle better than his God.

fooleries which infidels have most devoutly believed, and which are too much for the deglutition of most Christian old women. The great Hobbs, whose atheistic metaphysics shook all England to the centre, was so afraid of *pokers*, that he never ventured to sleep alone in a dark room. Hume, who regarded all religions, and Christianity among the rest, as *the playsome whimsies of monkeys in human shape*, yet rather supposed, on the whole, that the Pagan mythology was the true system of the universe—he was sure that *that* worship was the most easy and pleasing to his taste. Lord Herbert, who could not believe the miracles of the gospel, nor see any thing in the moral designs of the gospel worthy of an occasion on which miracles should be wrought, nevertheless supposed his own book so important to the welfare of mankind, that a sweet voice, about noon-day, as he was sitting in his room, came from Heaven and urged him to publish it. Cardinal Mazarin was kept awake for whole nights, by the predictions of an astrologer; and Cardan could foretell his future fortunes, by little specks rising on his finger nails. Such are the triumphs of philosophy; and these are the men, who charge Christians with credulity for believing in a system which commanded the assent of a Newton, and lighted up the devotions of a Pascal.

If infidelity works such folly in the strongest brains, one may well suppose that it will upset the wits of those who are only infidels as far as their parts will

allow. The truth is, a man must have some genius to make infidelity wear well; and nothing is more credulous than a weak head attempting to carry the strong notions of its betters. Infidelity is like brandy, which, while it makes some *good fellows* gay and amusing, taken in the same draughts, it turns others into drunken sots. Let common mortals beware, and leave to Hercules his club, and to Voltaire his principles. I heard a poor man, in a country town, complaining, a few years ago, that the political movements of our country puzzled him; he had his eye on the office of postmaster; he had been trying to know which party would be uppermost; but no sooner did he take his side, than, unluckily, the party he joined went down; and, with some spleen, he remarked, he wished he could tell which party would be uppermost for six months to come. Our political movements, he said, in Washington, completely baffled his powers. Now, what this man is to Van Buren, a common infidel is to David Hume. The system is too much for his head, however congenial it may be to his moral feelings.

My neighbor, Dr. Littletoad, is an infidel as far as he understands the subject. He has imbibed the notion, that it is highly becoming a doctor of medicine to be very skeptical on all other subjects; and I hardly know which are most harmless, his principles or his pills. I have never taken either; and I am as ignorant of the composition of the one as the other.

The doctor is always laughing at the credulity of mankind. He wishes to believe the Bible, but he is a philosopher, and cannot be so credulous as the vulgar herd. I was reading to him, the other day, the account of the resurrection of Lazarus, and asked him what he thought of it. 'Why, sir,' said he, 'there are great difficulties in the way of receiving that story. It cannot be accounted for on any of the principles of gravity, or galvanism, or electricity. Perhaps, however, Lazarus may have been in a state of suspended animation; and we have known people in a syncope to recover by a blow on the hand, or a voice in the ear.' So, Dr. Littletoad has some hopes that the story of Lazarus may be true.

Dr. Littletoad delights to hold the balance of probability with an impartial hand, as if it were a moot point, and a matter of indifference to mankind, whether the supernatural events of revelation were believed or not. The geology of Moses puzzles him amazingly; and he considers it very hard to conceive that mankind descended originally from one pair; though, on other occasions, I have heard him maintain that the *orang-outang* is but an uneducated offshoot of the human race. He rather supposes there may be such a thing as equivocal generation. He has seen a horse-hair play strange pranks after having been soaked in water; and a very sensible ship-master told him, on his honor, that he saw growing, on a tree in the West Indies, *a something*, which looked very

much like an incipient man. He wished that the vegetable embryo had been suffered to ripen. In this, however, the doctor was very disinterested; for the best part of his practice consists in being a man-midwife.

But the most credulous man that ever I knew, is my old school-fellow, Abner Alltail. Abner was an unaccountable boy, when young, and signalized himself at school, by endeavoring to make impossible gimcracks. He tried to fly a kite, with a string at the tail instead of at the head; and once insisted, that the only true way to navigate a boat, was to put the rudder forward. This, he said, was *steering*, in the proper sense of the word. As Abner grew up, he became an infidel; and often has he mentioned to me the argument which carried conviction to his mind, and which, he says, is unanswerable. Happening to meet with a translation of Lucretius, he there found that that bad philosopher, but beautiful poet, teaches the motion of the atoms, through the vast inane, combining and conforming in various adhesions, until this world of beauty, and man at the head of it, arose as the true shapes happened to jumble together. This, Alltail combined with the rule of permutations and combinations, as he found it stated in Pike's arithmetic. 'You must grant me,' said he, one day when he was descanting on his favorite theme, 'that all sorts of combinations, in these atoms, are possible; you must grant me, further,

that one of these combinations is the present system of order and beauty; suns, stars, mists, streams, birds, beasts, man, male and female. Now, sir,' continued he, 'these atoms have had an indefinite period in past time, to shake about like the figures in a kaleidoscope, and you and I happen to fall on the present configuration. That 's all.' I told him I had never seen a system of cosmogony more easily despatched. I ought to have mentioned before, that Abner is an old bachelor, and hates the present race of women almost as much as he hates his Bible. But, as he wants a wife, whenever he can find a suitable one, he is resolved to carry his system of philosophy into practice. He has procured himself a kind of long tub, like the circular churn, which I have seen among the Dutchmen in New York. This tub, or vessel, turns with a crank, and he has put into it some of the finest pipe-clay he could get, together with pulverized marble and chalk, mixed with a little milk and water. This he turns diligently, for six hours every morning, and says he doubts not, when the right configuration of particles comes about, he shall see a beautiful woman hop out of his tub, whom he intends to marry. I called on him the other day, and found him sweating away at his task, nothing discouraged by the *sweet, reluctant, amorous delay*, with which his bride, *in posse* and not *in esse*, treats his philosophic advances. Abner has been at work on the project now for almost a whole year; and I

asked him if he was not about discouraged. 'No,' said he, with great simplicity; 'for, though it is possible that this crank may be turned for billions of ages, and the right configuration not be found, it is possible, also, it may come the next moment.' Poor Abner! before I embrace your principles, I think I shall wait until you have found your wife.

THE PURITAN.

No. 9.

A faint erroneous ray
Glanced from the imperfect surfaces of things,
Flings half an image on the straining eye.
Thomson's Summer.

If a man were to have eyes sensitive to some of the objects in the prospect, but partially or totally blind to others, we should at once pronounce the organs of his vision to be defective; because a good eye implies equal sensibility to whatever is revealed by the light of heaven. Such a defect is known in those curious cases, in which some people are incapable of distinguishing some colors. Now, in all languages, knowledge has been expressed by a metaphor, or half-metaphor, borrowed from seeing; which shows there is an analogy (perhaps the closest in nature) between the perception of the mind and the function of the eye. In some cases, they act together; and it is impossible to separate them, though

we may be able to distinguish. We may say, then, that a good mind should resemble a good eye, and be awake to all the proofs or arguments in the intellectual prospect, which God, the source of knowledge, has spread around it. It is natural to consider our perceptive faculties, intuition, reason, or whatever we choose to call it, as a kind of mental eye. All the possible arguments or proofs, which can be adduced on any side of any question, are a kind of complex landscape, lying around the investigating mind; and, as a good eye discerns all the bright spots and dark corners in the literal horizon, and especially discerns what is the limit of its vision, and where are the boundaries between the clear and obscure; so, I suppose, it is the office of a well-balanced mind, to take all considerations into view—to weigh the force of all proofs, and make its inward belief an exact picture of the external world. The field and the forest, the mountain and the meadow, are not more exactly pictured on the retina of the pleased spectator, than the parts of external truth are reflected in the cautious conclusions of a wise and impartial man.

But this exact balance, this clearness to discern all that is true, and willingness to be impressed by it, certainly implies that we know the weakness of our powers as well as their strength. A good eye discerns not the light alone; it distinguishes the faintest shadow that passes beneath the sun. To see, implies that we clearly know when we do not see. If a

man is walking around mountains and comes to a cave, if he have good eyes, he as clearly knows that the cave is dark, as he knows that the atmosphere above it is light. Hence, one of the first articles of knowledge, in a well-regulated mind, is to know its own ignorance. On this, Socrates valued himself; and this part of knowledge he carefully taught. The wisest and best men have always delighted to dwell on this theme. They have considered a conscious sense of our ignorance as the best motive to awaken that curiosity which leads to improvement. The man that never makes the negative discovery, will never make the positive. 'Creation,' says bishop Butler, 'is absolutely and entirely out of our depth, and beyond the extent of our utmost reach. * * * It is, indeed, in general, no more than effects, that the most knowing are acquainted with; for, as to causes, they are as entirely in the dark as the most ignorant. What are the laws by which matter acts upon matter, but certain effects; which some, having observed to be frequently repeated, have reduced to general rules? The real nature and essence of beings, likewise, is what we are altogether ignorant of. All these things are so entirely out of our reach, that we have not the least glimpse of them.'* Such is the condition of man, with all his boasted powers; the best penetration only leads him to discover their weakness.

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* Butler's Sermons, Sermon xv.

Our knowledge, however, of the fallacy of any instrument we use, naturally leads us to distrust that instrument; and all the objects it may assist us to accomplish. The mind is an instrument as well as an agent. It is the instrument by which we investigate and discover the truth. As the telescope is the instrument by which we look at the stars, and as the magic tool has converted their glittering points into worlds and systems, so reason—which is but the mind reasoning—is the instrument by which we have discovered the truths which lie in the remotest circle of our intellectual vision. But, if the instrument be so very fallacious, how can we help distrusting its results? or, in other words, must not the known ignorance of man produce and justify a very large degree of skepticism? It has always been pretended by infidels, that their doubts in religion were but the result of their superior discernment; their skepticism was but the effect of self-knowledge. All men teach that man has very limited powers—that he reasons to be deceived, and asserts to be confuted. The best men have made it a motive of humility that we know so little. The ignorance of man is the universal theme; even revelation itself tells us that we see through a glass darkly. Now, if man be ignorant, he ought to know his ignorance; he ought to know it to the utmost extent. Self-knowledge, then, leads to a distrust of his powers; and distrust of our own powers is but another name for skepticism.

It is obvious, too, that some of the finest minds have been remarkable for this suspending of the balance; for this dubious, rather than settled, state of the intellect. Socrates made it his glory. Cicero considered it the foundation of philosophy. We trace the fragments of it in the writings of Pascal, warm as he was in the cause of religion. Dryden tells us that, being inclined to skepticism in philosophy, he had no reason to impose his opinions on a subject which was above it—namely, religion. Franklin was inclined to the same state of mind; and the most learned men, who have been without this latent skepticism—namely, a sense of their own ignorance, sensibility to the force of an objection—have in this age lost much of their power over the human mind. I will adduce two examples, of men embracing opposite principles—Calvin and Hobbs. It is well known, that Hobbs has lost his power, as a philosopher, chiefly by his dogmatism. He is a very peculiar instance of a man, opposed to implicit faith, and yet demanding an implicit faith of his own. Of Calvin, I am free to say, that the chief impediment to profit in perusing his writings, is the want of sensibility to human ignorance. He seldom feels the force of an objection. Now, such a man we distrust. We feel as little inclined to allow the force of his conclusions, as we should be to weigh guineas in a pair of scales, which could only turn from an equilibrium on one side.

Such, then, is one of the essential elements of human nature. So is man constituted by God. His powers are weak and fallacious; and it is his duty to know it; knowing it, he becomes inclined to skepticism. The ignorant never doubt; the intelligent must. And this broad propensity must be met somehow by the claims of religion.

When we turn to the Bible, at first view it may seem to be very little calculated to meet this state of mind. It requires a confident belief in all its doctrines; it even suspends salvation on the condition of that belief. It seems to be addressed to our fears more than to our reason. When we read the history of some notorious impostor—such, for example, as Matthias, in Luther's day, and Matthias, recently in New York—we always find two ingredients in his delusion: one is implicit belief in what he says, and the other is, terror used as the chief argument to enforce that belief. In such cases, confidence is the great virtue, and incredulity is the only crime. Now, I apprehend, one of the greatest impediments to the general reception of the gospel, is an apprehended resemblance between its claims and the claims of all impostors. This apprehension operates far wider than on avowed infidels. Many have felt it secretly checking their confidence in the gospel, who are far from the conclusion deliberately to reject it. They seem to half suspect, at least, that faith is the abandonment of reason; that it is something which

sets aside all the ordinary operations of the human powers; something which mistakes the nature of man, and puts confidence and credulity in the place of those very arguments on which confidence and credit can alone justly be built. Hell-fire, it may be said, is a powerful motive when proved, but a very weak argument when it stands nakedly in place of a proof.

My design shall be to prove, that the Bible does show this very knowledge of human nature which is denied to it; and that this natural skepticism, in well-regulated minds, is the very thing which makes it meet the wants of man.

In the first place, then, this skepticism is not universal; or, in other words, knowledge is as much an element of human nature as ignorance. To decide in certain cases is as much a law of a well-regulated mind as to doubt in certain cases. The fallacy of the skeptic consists in this: that he concludes from the partial to the universal; we are ignorant of some things, therefore we are ignorant of all. But this is exactly contrary to the spirit of induction, which requires us to bring in all the items which bear on the case. If I were to enter an orchard, in which there were an hundred trees, and, after examining ninety-nine of them, and finding no fruit, were to conclude, without examination, the same of the hundredth, it would be hasty reasoning; for that may be the one fruitful tree. Yet, this is what we are

strongly tempted to do. Nay, we stop short of this, and jump to general conclusions, from a very inadequate number of observations. Sometimes, under strong prejudices and passions, the mind will sweep to the most general result from one excepted case. Shakspeare introduces one of his characters, saying —when he found, or thought he found his wife to be unfaithful to him—

> 'We are bastards, all;
> And that most venerable man, which I
> Did call my father, was, I know not where,
> When I was stamped; some coiner with his tools,
> Made me a counterfeit. Yet my mother seemed
> The Dian of that time; so doth my wife
> The nonpareil of this.'

So Mrs. Page says, in the '*Merry Wives of Windsor*,' after having heard Falstaff talk morality and tempt her virtue—'Well,' she says, 'I will find you twenty lascivious turtles ere one chaste man.' All this is beautiful, considered as picturing our propensity to general conclusions; but it shows how general conclusions, from inadequate premises, mislead us. When Sir Walter Raleigh burnt a part of his history because he was deceived as to a scuffle, which he saw through the window of his prison, he reasoned like a blockhead; and I hope, for his credit's sake, the story is not true. Human life is a compound scene; if there is darkness in which we wander, there is day-

light in which we can see; and both these belong to human nature. To confound these distinctions, does not prove that skepticism is necessary, but that the skeptic has made a bad use of his eyes. There is no universal midnight, oh thou universal doubter, but in thine own soul!

But, secondly, I will go farther, and say that the darkness illustrates the light; or, without a metaphor, our ignorance proves our knowledge. In order to show this, let us suppose a case. Suppose some metaphysician should come and endeavor to perplex my notions of perception. He should say it is no proof, because you see a tree, that that tree exists; for there is such a thing as dreaming; and life may be but little else than a protracted dream. This, you know, is the philosophy of the Hindoos; and the great Berkley came very near to similar conclusions. Now, what should I say to such a man? I should say to him, 'Sir, I have dreamed; and my own experience informs, as clearly as I can conceive human information to speak, that a tree seen in a dream, is a very different thing from a tree seen when awake. The error reflects light on that knowledge which stands in contrast with the error. If all perceptions were alike; if I had never seen the dream in contrast with the reality; I might suppose that seeing was dreaming. Or, to state the case stronger, (for this comparison hardly comes up to the point,) if, when I turn my eyes on vacancy, I discern no tree, and

when I turn my eyes to one point in the orchard, or forest, I perceive one, the negative perception strengthens the positive one, and rescues a comparing mind from all the sophistry of the skeptic. When we have completed the catalogue of the objects *unknown*, by a kind of intellectual subtraction, we find that the remaining objects are *known*.

The truth is, in the infancy of our reason, the objects of creation lie before us in a kind of logical chaos; and we have not yet had leisure to separate the confusion into its elements. A partial discrimination may lead to a very general skepticism; but, as we proceed to discriminate, we know better when we ought to doubt and when to believe. So that skepticism, on some subjects, is so far from justifying skepticism on all, that it is the very thing that brings the mind to an intelligent conclusion.

THE PURITAN.

No. 10.

For truth, like a stately dame, will not be seen, nor show herself, at the first visit, nor match with the understanding, upon an ordinary courtship, or address.—*Dr. South.*

Perhaps the best illustration of the remarks in the last number might be borrowed from a department deeply connected with religion. It is well known that the genius of skepticism has attempted to pour her shadows over the page of history. There can be no doubt, that there are great uncertainties as to the origin of nations. Invention has supplied the place of investigation; and imagination has spread her colors over the canvass which should have been filled with the images of truth. The first history of Greece is uncertain; the whole story of Pisistratus has been disputed; the imposition of Lycurgus's laws, on the Lacedemonians, appears more like the work of some rhetorician, than the wisdom of a real

statesman. And the early history of Rome is considered by many as very doubtful. Now, from all this, some hasty minds would conclude that history is false. So with regard to characters and motives, how little can be known! how much painting is mixed with the best authenticated narratives! I have noticed that some of the most experienced statesmen, who live to a period just after the important events in which they have been active, are extremely apt to represent the history of their own times as uncertain. 'O, tell not me of history,' said Sir Robert Walpole, 'for that I know to be false.' The late President Adams considered, in one of his letters to Mr. Niles, of Baltimore, the real cause and character of things in our revolutionary war, as buried in oblivion; and Aaron Burr, according to Mr. Knapp's representation, has made a similar remark. Now, what a strong case! Here are living witnesses, sagacious men, the very agents of the events, who represent history as uncertain. But a little reflection will show us that even the wisest men, the Walpoles and Adamses, are deceived by their partial views. They stand in the very spot to generate doubt. Truth is the daughter of time; and the agitated water must settle a little before it can become so clear as to allow us to see to the bottom. The first historians are always mistaken; they are not only misled by their prejudices, but they have not the full amount of materials; for history is a hemisphere,

where star after star rises to complete the fullness of the sky. I regard the proofs of history like the dead bodies, after some great naval battle; at first, they seem to be buried forever in the secrets of the ocean; but they arise continually, one after another, and it becomes possible almost to count the number and estimate the loss. Besides, the great events of history are as clear as the minuter ones are obscure. There appear to be general laws of probability—a level of evidence, into which all things settle. These laws are just as certain as any other laws of nature; and produce as deep a conviction in the mind of him who knows them.

Skepticism in history has run through the same round it has in most other subjects. There are three states through which the mind commonly passes: first, we begin with a general confidence in all that is told—a blind credulity, often the parent of an equally blind uncertainty: secondly, comes the first period of discrimination, when the vision, knowing some things to be false, begins to doubt of all: then thirdly, follows the period of a more careful discrimination, when the mind, knowing what to receive and what to reject, settles into a rational doubt of some things, and equally rational confidence in others. This is the process of most inquiring minds. It has been the process, too, with regard to public opinion; for public opinion, as well as individuals, has its childhood, its adolescence, and its maturity. There was

a time when all writers, in Latin or Greek, were believed; then, almost all were doubted; and now, the current is manifestly turning—applying severe laws of evidence to the witnesses of time. There can be no question, that the latter state is more clear from the proofs through which it has passed. No doubt that Niebuhr had a deeper conviction of the luminous points of Roman history from the dark spots he had detected, and the skill with which he had discriminated them; and thus our position is true, that a rational doubt leads to a firmer belief.

But, in the third place, skepticism—that is, the doubts of minds which doubt because they are discerning; that healthful skepticism, which springs from knowledge, and leads to knowledge's increase—must be regarded as the antithesis, not of revelation, but of reason; it is opposed, not to what God has said, but to what man can discover by the legitimate use of his own faculties. I have already remarked, that man is ignorant, and that the wisest men have known this; and, knowing this, they must feel a degree of skepticism. This was the foundation of Socrates' doubts; this made Cicero an academician. But, if this be the origin of skepticism, where does it terminate? Certainly not in weakening the dictates of revelation, but in weakening the conclusions of that human reason which is so often opposed to revelation. Respecting revelation, there are two questions: what proves it a revelation? and next, what

does the revelation prove? Now, supposing our faculties competent to answer the first question, notwithstanding their weakness, skepticism is scarcely at all opposed to the second; because a revelation is given, on the supposition that man is too weak, in any other way, to find out its truth. In other words, our distrust, in the fallacy of our own reason, does not touch upon a truth that we know comes from the reason of God. If I could prove that all the lamps in the world shed a feeble and fallacious light, it would be no evidence against the clearness of those beams which come from the sun.

Perhaps, however, it will be asked, 'will not the alleged feebleness of our powers affect the first question?' Have we power to see the evidence of revelation? Now, be it remarked, that all that is said of the mysteries of religion, the incomprehensibleness of its doctrines, the deep abyss of the divine essence, the whole subject being above reason, &c. does not affect this question in the slightest degree. Religion may be compared to the patriarch's ladder: if the height is lost in the clouds, the foot is on the ground. Only once allow that the evidences are on the level of human reason, and you have a succession of rounds to climb up to the other mysteries, which are settled on the authority of God. These two questions ought not to be confounded. The evidences of religion are of three kinds: first, the adaptation of its truths to our wants and consciences; secondly, the prophecies

and their fulfilment; and thirdly, the miracles. The first of these questions is certainly level to our faculties; the word is *nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart.* The two second resolve themselves into the laws of historical probability; and of these, we have already discovered that a sound and passing skepticism only leads to a closer result. Skepticism here means no more than that you should suspend your judgment until you have fully examined the cause.

Of the miracles, perhaps something more might be said. Two questions may be asked concerning the miracles: first, what proves the miracle; and secondly, what does the miracle prove. The whole difficulty in proving Christianity, lies, I apprehend, in the first of these questions; for I cannot think that any skeptic, if he had heard a preacher delivering such precepts as Jesus Christ delivered, would have doubted his divine authority, if he had actually seen him raise Lazarus from the dead. Metaphysical difficulties, perhaps, might be raised to the proof afforded by a miracle; but practically there could be none. It is the first question, then, what proves the miracle? at which modern skepticism labors. I would then say, if there be any certainty in the laws of historical probability—if the human mind be adequate to examine this subject—if impositions sink, and truth generally prevails—if what is false, as South says, is always in danger of being known—if supernatural events are not improbable, and, should they happen,

are not necessitated to lie wrapt up in eternal darkness,—why, then I say that no skepticism, grounded on the incurable weakness of the human powers, (and this is the only just ground,) need invalidate the proof of a miracle. For history has its laws; and if the mind be adequate to anything, it is adequate to a knowledge of these laws. Or, in other words, the question is not peculiarly mysterious; it lies within the circle of our intellectual vision; and no darkness, which lies out of that circle, can pour the least uncertainty on an object which lies within it.

The truth is, we have more reason to adduce the uncertainties of skepticism to overthrow the philosophy of Newton, than we have to weaken or overthrow any article of Christian faith. For skepticism stands naturally opposed to philosophy, but not to religion. Philosophy is grounded on the free and independent use of the human powers; and skepticism is grounded on the weakness of those powers; and thus, the weakness of an instrument proves its inadequacy to accomplish its objects. But, the weakness of one instrument proves not the weakness of another. Certainly the mind is more competent to see the evidences of religion, than to follow the reasoning of a Newton. Yet, we seldom hear of skepticism as opposed to natural philosophy.

Thus far we have considered the operations of principles in the abstract; but if we look on them as actually incorporated with the human mind, we

shall find they exhibit and justify the same conclusions.

I scarcely know of two men, who resembled each other, in the intellectual structure of their minds, more than Joseph Butler and David Hume. Both of them men of genius, fond of abstract discussion; not very imaginative; sagacious, acute, discriminating, and deeply impressed with the fallacy of human reason, and of course inclined to skepticism. Take their minds, as furnished by nature, and they are almost exactly alike. I hardly know which is the greatest doubter. But, to what different results did they come. Hume showed the negative side, and stopped there. He showed the weakness of reason; he had no wish to proceed and show its strength. He pointed out clearly that we must doubt; he had no desire to show when we must believe. Butler proved, as clearly as Hume could, the weakness of our reason; but he went on and completed the whole circle. Hume, when he performed the process of skeptical subtraction, had no purpose of showing that any quantity remained. Butler showed that, after large subtractions, there was much remaining. Hume, in tracing his circle of philosophy, showed us there was a hemisphere of darkness and night. Butler showed as wide a circle, perhaps, of darkness as he; but he showed us, also, a hemisphere of day. The one gave us the half-truths of sophistry, and the other the *integrity*, or wholeness of true wisdom. There

is a beautiful example of Butler's philosophy, in a single paragraph of his sermon on HUMAN IGNORANCE: 'Creation,' says he, 'is absolutely and entirely out of our depth, and beyond the extent of our utmost reach. And yet, it is as certain, that God made the world, as it is certain that effects must have a cause.' What a beautiful specimen of comprehensive truth! Stop at the first paragraph, and you would suppose that the author was about to throw darkness over the creation, and blot out all proofs of the divine existence. But read the second, and you discover that the author fixes one of the fundamental truths of religion on its surest foundation. In short, as some generals begin the battle by a retreat, only to break the ranks of the enemy, and to prepare for a more terrible onset, so such doubters as Butler, state their objections, only more firmly to establish their cause. In such pages, we pass through the night to enjoy the day.

One point more remains to be noticed; and that is, how the Bible corresponds with these laws of the human mind.

It is certain, the Bible requires a strong faith in its truths; and the question is, how such a requisition is consistent with the natural skepticism which all the reflecting must feel, and all, who are ingenuous as well as reflecting, must own.

Strong faith may mean, either the unhesitating assent we give to a presented proposition, or the strong effects or emotions which that proposition awa-

kens in the heart. In the second sense, I apprehend there can be no difficulty. For, only once admit that the existence of God is proved, and no language can express the depths of conviction, the sense of his presence, the reverence, love, and humility, which ought to occupy our hearts. So, once admit that the Bible is the word of God, and the most implicit trust in its doctrines is the most natural result. In other words, the truths of the Bible are calculated to produce deep impressions; and, in this sense, strong faith is as much a legitimate result of revelation as deep grief at the sight of a pathetic tragedy. This is the philosophy of the sacred writer, when he said —'*I believed, and therefore have I spoken.*' But, as to the first sense of strong faith: it seems to me, that if scrutiny, after subtracting doubtful points, leaves the remaining more certain, and if the proofs of revelation do remain after scrutiny, why, then it is natural that this skepticism should lead to a stronger faith. Accordingly, we find that no men have had a deeper conviction of religion than those who have at first questioned or denied its truths. It is exactly the process we should expect. It is as natural as sunrising. A RESOLVED DOUBT IS THE STRONGEST PROOF. Paul began by opposing religion, and ended one of its strongest advocates; and I think, if we could have looked into the mind of Butler, we should have found an amount of faith there which a less scrutinizing

mind could hardly comprehend.* A blown-away fog leaves the ocean sparkling with the purest light.

All this is exactly laid down in the Bible. It completely meets the known laws of the mind. WE SEE THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY. There is a principle of skepticism in every man. The greatest dogmatists sometimes feel it. Some confident conclusions have been overthrown; and the boldest doubt. The Bible justifies this; we see through a glass *darkly*.

But, in all minds there is a principle of belief. The most skeptical sometimes feel it. It is so unnatural for a man always to hesitate, that he must sometimes conclude. Though the glass is dark, yet through it we SEE. And so, both arcs join, and the circle is complete.

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* I speak of faith, here, in the first sense; how strong Butler's emotions were, is another question.

THE PURITAN.

No. 11.

If any ask why roses please the sight?
Because their leaves upon thy cheeks do bower:
If any ask why lilies are so white?
Because their blossoms in thy hand do flower:
Or why sweet plants so grateful odors shower?
It is because thy breath so like they be:
Or why the orient sun so bright we see?
What reason can we give, but from thine eyes and thee?
Fletcher's Christ's Victory. Canto I. *Stanza* xlv.

The necessity of faith, or a deep conviction of the truths of Christianity, has been insisted on, by all theological writers, as the foundation of a holy and consistent life. But, I believe, every one has felt, in some skeptical hour, the wish that his faith might be strengthened by some ocular proof of the Christian religion. We have always seen the laws of nature glide with undeviating uniformity; the sun rises and sets; the spring and the winter return; man is born and dies, with a regularity so constant, and at periods so generally expected, that the course of nature seems like the decree of fate; and a species of naturalism

is silently resting even on some sober and believing minds. St. Peter has touched one of the sources of infidelity when he says, '*Since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.*' The regularity of the laws of nature, though designed as light to reveal, becomes a cloud, to hide the interposition of God.

I should be a very imperfect Puritan, if I did not confess myself to be a firm Christian; and yet, I must confess, I have often felt my mind exercised on the obscurity of the proofs of revelation. I have longed to see the Deity step out from his hiding-place, and give some visible tokens of his power. I have hungered and thirsted after a miracle. I have tried to imagine the emotions of surprise and adoration, which would shake my heart, could I once see the laws of nature suspended. But no; she rolls on, in the same rigid uniformity. No spiritual voice meets my spirit, to attest the presence of anything in nature but the plastic power, which executes her silent laws. I have walked on the sea-shore, and heard the roaring of its waves; I have sat amidst the tombs, at midnight; I have listened, with the intensest interest, amidst the deep solitudes of the woods; I have fled from the living, and implored the dead for some supernatural voice to break on the abstracted ear of faith and meditation.

> 'Tell us, ye dead!—will none of you, in pity?
> O, that some courteous ghost would blab it out!'

But all has been in vain. Nature, rigid, silent, unconscious nature, is always interposing her material images between me and my God.

I have sometimes been led to envy the privileges of the first Christians; and to wish that I had been born in those happier days. I should then have heard the gospel as it was delivered from the lips of Infinite Wisdom, and seen the proofs, which might silence skepticism and awaken a conquering faith in the most sluggish heart. I might have caught some notes of the heavenly hosts, as they sung over 'the quiet innocence' of the shepherds, at midnight, and have stood at the tomb of Lazarus, when the voice of his Redeemer called him from the dead. There is an impression resting on my heart, that I should have conquered my sins with more facility; and have lived more devoted to that celestial power, which was everywhere manifested around. Hail, ye happy spirits! Why have ye not transmitted to later ages your wonderful works?—and thou, bright morn of Christianity, why were thy dews so transient, and thy reign so short? I have but little faith; I own it. But no angel has ever visited me from the skies; no saint has spoken to my midnight dreams; no miracle has ever met my eye. I have but little faith; but my heart longs to find an excuse and a cause in the little proof.

Full of these reflections, I lately retired to sleep; and, the impressions of the day following me, I was favored with a dream.

I seemed to be walking beneath a steep precipice, on the eastern shores of the lake Gennesaret. The waters seemed to be hushed in the profoundest tranquillity, and their color was tinged with the purple rays of the setting sun. The day was declining; the shadows of the mountains were stretched upon the waters; and a secret sanctity seemed to pervade the scene, which witnessed the wonders once wrought in it by the Redeemer of men. I felt an increase of faith, as my eye stole over the objects around me, and I could almost fancy I could see the lake agitated by a storm; the bark of the disciples laboring amid the waves. I could almost fancy I heard his voice speaking to the tempest, and saying, 'Peace, be still!' But still, the laws of nature seemed to regain their invisible hold on every object around me. The waves laved the shores, as other waves do; and the rocks reflected their gigantic shadows, in the bosom of the lake, like other rocks. I still felt the chilling influence of unbelief.

While I was walking, I noticed, at a little distance from me, a pale old man, dressed in the habits of antiquity, with a remarkable, incredulous aspect. He appeared to be counting his fingers, walking with an irregular step, until at last he fixed his eyes with a look of compassion on me. I immediately knew him to be Thomas Didymus, the apostle so famous for his unbelief. I approached him, with low reverence, and thus began: 'O thou once frail mortal on earth, now

certainly a saint in glory, have compassion on my weakness, and hear me tell my wo. Thou hast been the prey of doubt; thy mind was once the region of darkness, as mine is now; thou didst say, when on earth—'*Except I shall see in his hands the print of his nails, and put my fingers in the print of the nails,* (here the vision shook his head, and dropped a tear,) *and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.*' Such is exactly my condition. I long for ocular proof. Tell me, where shall I find it? The saint fixed his eyes upon me, and, with his long white finger, kept pointing at my breast. But, though his countenance was full of meaning, he spoke not a word, and continued pointing to my heart, while he fixed his eye constantly and fearfully upon me. I felt an irresistible disposition to look away to the lake; I expected to see it ruffled by storms and stilled by some word of miraculous power; I called for signs from Heaven; I gazed, to see if the wing of some angel would not cleave the clouds, and, from its silver feathers, dart some supernatural light into my mind. Still, the apostle continued pointing his finger at my breast; and, with a deliberate step, he approached nearer and nearer to the spot on which I stood. There was something inexpressibly awful in his long-continued silence. My heart beat with apprehension. 'Speak!' said I; 'speak, thou dumb vision, and tell how I may be satisfied.' He still approached me, and pulling a little pocket Bible from

my pocket, began, with a melancholy air, to turn over the leaves. I noticed, however, as he was turning, that certain letters, blazed with suns, so that, though the print was fine, I could read particular passages at a great distance. The apostle began to wave his hand and step backwards. 'Why,' said I, 'has the impartial one denied to me that ocular demonstration, which he afforded to the first disciples?' He held up the Bible, and I saw blazing in lines of fire, these words: '*If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one arose from the dead.*' 'Alas!' said I, 'is there no way for me to obtain a firmer faith?' He held up the book, and I saw shining as before—'*If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.*' The apostle still kept receding, though the letters were as large and as intelligible as before. He was now almost beyond my sight, retiring behind a rock, which was about to intercept him from my view. 'Stay,' said I, 'stay, and do not leave me so unsatisfied; speak once and let me hear. Why has not the same evidence been vouchsafed to me, as to the earlier Christians? Why has not my sight increased my faith?' The apostle then threw down my book, and I read on a blank leaf, these words, which vanished as I read them, and were never seen in the faintest trace afterwards: 'Idle doubter, why do you complain? You have your peculiar difficulties; we had ours. We saw the miracles, but

we saw not the brighter proofs of the influence of Christianity, through a series of ages, on the heart. We had the prejudices of education to encounter, and to tear the most cherished opinions from the centre of the soul. The best miracle is a renovated heart. So, doubter, purge thine eyes, and there is light enough.' I looked up, and the apostle was gone ; and the evening winds, through the shades of midnight, were sighing over the sea of Gennesaret.

THE PURITAN.

No. 12.

Believe it not:
The primal duties shine aloft, like stars;
The characters that soothe, and heal, and bless,
Are scattered at the feet of man like flowers;
The generous inclination, the just rule,
Kind wishes and good actions and pure thoughts—
No mystery is here; no special boon
For high and not for low, for proudly graced
And not for meek of heart. The smoke ascends
To Heaven as lightly from the cottage hearth
As from the haughty palace.

Wordsworth.

The poor and the rich meet together in our world, as the rose and the thorn grow on the same bush. My aunt Hannah was wont to say, when she came home from some splendid mansion to her father's humble, but certainly not uncomfortable abode, "I have been to the wrong place to-day; it is more profitable to visit those below us than above us. With the rich we learn to murmur, and from the poor we

may take a lesson of contentment." Hence, I suppose, to find this needed lesson, she was sometimes accustomed to visit the poor-house.

The Bundleborough alms-house stood at the foot of a high hill, which fenced it, if not from the *cold Septentrion blast*, yet from Eurus and *Argestes loud*. It was built of a pale dirty brick, and I can seem to see its fan-placed tiles over its windows, forming a semi-arch, which seemed to laugh at the rules of Gothic or Grecian architecture. All alms-houses are alike; and Crabbe has described its interior and local condition exactly. It stood, there

> "Where the putrid vapors flagging play,
> And the dull wheel hums doleful through the day;
> There children dwell, who know no parent's care,
> Parents, who know no children's love, dwell there;
> Heart-broken matrons on their joyless bed,
> Forsaken wives, and mother's never wed;
> The lame, the blind, and, far the happiest they,
> The moping idiot and the madman gay."

One morning, after my aunt had spent the previous afternoon at Squire Wilson's, by far the genteelest family in our neighborhood, she received the news that a young woman was sick in the poor-house, whose intelligence and good morals seemed to bespeak that she was one of those unhappy characters, who have fallen from refinement to poverty, and was now left friendless and sick, to die, neglected and alone.

She went; and I begged to accompany her; and we found the sick and suffering victim, in a little stived room, smelling strongly of oakum, in which were two other beds, and a compound of all the villanous smells, calculated rather to destroy health, than to restore the sick to health again. There were six people crowded into the same room—one old woman with a cancer; an old man with a sore leg; an Irish damsel with her illegitimate child: no fresh air, which I consider as the best of medicines; no sweet and cooling breeze visited the feverish blood, in this stived and polluted apartment; but on a little flock-bed, separated from the rest by a blanket suspended on two forks, lay one of the loveliest and most patient forms, that ever was resigned by disease, to the mouldering arms of death.

Sarah Liddell, (for this was her name,) was rather small of stature, of a slender frame, with a cheek, which a hectic flush had by no means robbed of its beauty; with an eye, though impaired by disease, still bright and expressive; and with one of the softest voices that ever melted on the human ear. When we saw her, she was in her twenty-seventh year; a period when a woman's beauty is thought to have reached that maturity, which is on the point of decay. On the whole, I thought her the handsomest woman I had ever seen. She had beauty; the highest beauty; the beauty not only of color and form, but of expression. But alas! what is beauty, when united

to poverty; when the gift of one, destined to tread the unprotected walks of common life. I have often heard it said, that to those girls, who live out at service, in our cities, beauty is at once the intoxication and the bane. It is one of those treacherous gifts, bestowed only to endanger their virtue and increase their misery.

In her several interviews with my aunt, she told her story; which I found recorded in my aunt's hand writing; and what made it to me still more affecting, she never seemed to have discovered what was the cause of her calamities. She related her story with the simplicity of a child.

I don't know what my faults have been, Miss Oldbug, but I have been persecuted ever since the ceasing of my childhood. Ah! madam, ladies in your situation know not how much poor girls have to go through, who have nothing but their character to support them. So long ago as I can remember, I was the only daughter of a widowed mother, who was put to the hardest shifts to support me and herself. She had been well educated; she wished to be genteel; and when I was about seventeen years old, she married a physician, just fifteen years younger than herself. Every body thought it an imprudent match; and, as she had very little property to entice a young husband to this connection, every body found it difficult to divine what could be his motive. I can hardly believe myself that he had in view the horrid

purposes which he afterwards attempted to accomplish. But they had not been married six months before I found I was to be my mother's rival. My father-in-law was very assiduous in his attentions to me; indeed I first thought them no more than the permitted fondness which our new relation might produce and justify. But, in time, his advances became too odious to be mistaken; and I could not, I dare not reveal the secret to my mother, for I knew it would destroy the peace of our family. My situation was therefore a dreadful one; hourly incited to a dreadful crime, and no one to commune with but my Bible and my God. Shall I reveal the secrets of our family? For two long years I was obliged to tread the doubtful, dangerous path of resisting one parent's importunities, and laying the jealousies of the other asleep. I durst not tell it to others, it would be laying open the disgrace of our house; I dared not complain to my mother, I hardly dared to keep still. At last accident brought matters to a crisis. One day my mother came suddenly into the room, and found my father bestowing on me his hateful fondness. She had long been jealous, but now her suspicions were confirmed. O, what a scene! She reproached me; she tore my hair and her own; she stamped and raved; she ran to the medicine closet and seized the laudanum bottle; she heaped on me the names of those crimes to which I had been solicited, but certainly did not deserve; and in short the whole house

was a scene of agony and confusion. O how little we know what occurs in families! How smooth may be the surface, and what misery within! I could bear it no longer, and that night I left my home, under the light of the sweetest moon, resolved to go to Boston, and offer myself to service, determined to eat the bread of humble poverty, rather than to live in guilty dependence. It was about twenty miles to the city; and I was overtaken by a man alone in a chaise. He invited me to ride with him, which I at first declined, but was prevailed upon by his importunity to accept his offer, as I was half dead with fatigue. But, as the Scripture says, I did *flee from a lion, and a bear met me;* his conduct and conversation forced me out of the chaise, and the next morning, exhausted and weary, I reached the city before sunrise. I knew no person but one, and that was a young girl, who was a milliner, in Cornhill. Here I applied for lodging and for work. But the mistress of the shop informed me that I was too *ladyish* for her; besides, she said her number of apprentices was full. I then looked round for a place at domestic service. One lady wanted a character, another bid me tell my story; which I did, concealing, however, the most offensive parts, which I supposed would only disgrace our family. She heard me with a most incredulous look, eyed me with the sharpest suspicion, and finally told me she wanted none of those smart misses, who might dispute her right to her own parlor. I now

began to fear I might perish in the streets. One gentleman invited me to take a ride with him in a hack, just at the dusk of the evening, but I had had enough of solitary riding with stranger-gentlemen. At last, I found a place with a rich widow lady, who had an only son, about nineteen. She was really kind, and for about six months, I thought myself in a kind of paradise. The work was easy, my mistress was good tempered and affable—and for some time treated me almost like a friend, rather than a servant. I had time to read, which was my delight; and I begun at last to hope that I had found a harbor for repose. But as my ill-stars would have it, the widow's son became very fond of stealing down into the kitchen, and spending his evenings there; he kept a store, and he chose to come home a little after the dinner hour and dine with me; he would lend me books, and we read them together. He was a modest young man, very respectful in his attentions; and I am fully persuaded, his designs were honorable. But his mother could not brook the idea of any approaches to a marriage with a servant girl. So she called me one day, and after several commendations on my diligence and character, a thousand apologies, and many expressions of sorrow to part with me, she told me that circumstances were such, that she wanted me no longer; she gave me my wages, a few cast gowns, a ten-dollar bill, and dismissed me to find another place, promising me, however, if asked, a good character. I

next lived with a wedded lady who had no children; what my offences were here I never knew—but in a short time I was dismissed with such jest on my dowdy form, and such expressions of wonder, that any one could think me handsome, (a point for which I never contended,) that I almost concluded the lady crazy. Then I went to a boarding-house; but here my stay was short; my chamber door was frequently assaulted by midnight guests. In short, madam, my whole life has been an unhappy one—a poor girl, without father, mother, brother or friend, who lives out at service, is like the dove we read of in Scripture; *she finds no rest for the sole of her foot.* She has no encouragement to preserve her virtue; for if she does, she is not respected; and, if she falls, she sinks into prostitution, disease and death. The agitation of my condition, the changes in my life, have finally worn down my health, and the kind winds of Providence have blown me into this shelter; I once thought it a disgraceful thing to be in a work-house, but I am cured of that foolish pride. I must have been in some way wicked at least, or God never would have punished me by exposing me to such trials. O, Miss Oldbug, do you think that for such a sinner as I, there will be rest in heaven at last?

The remains of this excellent girl, lie buried in the Bundleborough grave yard. If you will enter that red gate, on which a loose staple hangs swinging, and over which there is a square frame, somewhat like a

gallows, you will see just fifteen feet at your right, a little brown slate stone, under the wall, apart from the rest, bending sideways towards the ground, sheltered by a barberry bush and almost covered by the waving grass. There is a head with wings under it, carved by some rude sculptor; and underneath are these verses, written in the true spirit of puritanical poetry, by one of those *mute inglorious Miltons*, found in every village in New England.

1799

S. L.

Here Sarah Liddell lies, to breathe no more,
Who had of beauty an uncommon store;
A prisoner once to flesh and sin was she;
Death struck her bloom, but Christ has set her free.

THE PURITAN.

No. 13.

THE WOUNDED SPIRIT.

Πέτομαι δ' ἐλπίσιν,
Οὔτ' ἐνθάδ' ὁρῶν, ὅτ' ὀπίσω.
Sophoclis Oldipus Tyrannus. Line 488.

The following poem was prepared to be delivered before a society in College many years ago. It is founded on a story which has been told of several persons, of two skeptics agreeing that whichever of them should die first, should appear to his surviving friend to bear ocular testimony to the existence of the future world. Whether such a wild agreement was ever made, I know not. The object of the poem is to enforce the truth of Christianity, from the wants, sorrows, and sins of man. The story is merely assumed for poetic effect. Morbid misanthropy and snarly infidelity, having lately been brought into vogue by some popular writers, I wished to turn them to some account. I have therefore represented a troubled infidel going into the grave yard, at midnight, to meet the ghost of his friend according to appointment; and there, though disappointed of the expected witness, led by reflection to believe in his Saviour and his God. Perhaps the severest and most candid criticism that ought to be passed on my piece, is, that it is *College poetry.*

Thronged by a host of doubts, the mind distrest
Looks round for truth, and longs for inward rest:
Tho' Pride and Passion in our hearts rebel,
And sensual nature o'er calm reason swell;

Though Fancy cheat us with her youthful train,
Her roses dying as her thorns remain ;
Though even Philosophy, the world's delight,
Throw on our path a dim, delusive light ;
Yet who, among the thinking class received,
Would hug the lie, or wish to be deceived ?
Though Error wanders, who would chase the stream ?
Or dream o'er truth 'till truth becomes a dream ?

'Tis night ; and sullen darkness' solemn robe
Envelops in concealment half the globe :
The planetary torches o'er me shine,
Dull sleep embraces every eye but mine.
Here at the feet of these entangled trees,
Whose branches, fretted by the midnight breeze,
O'ershade the ghosts from yonder graves that glide,
And flatter Nature in her silent pride ;—
Here will I muse, till from her secret throne,
Religion make her dubious lessons known :
From these abstracted walks I cannot part,
Till late conviction fasten on my heart.

This is the hour ; and on this grassy side,
Alonzo promised, ere he, trembling, died—
To meet his friend,—yes, I may trust the dead—
The words were uttered on a dying bed :
Long had we doubted—more—we disbelieved
Those mystic doctrines by the world received :
We travelled all the mazes of the mind,
Forever curious, yet forever blind ;
Along the brink of flowery joy we steered,
Believed and doubted, rioted and feared.

At length, in all his bloom, when youthful pride
Her branches stretched in towering hope—he died;
He died; and I was there to hear him tell
His last strong promise, still remembered well;—
"If there 's a world beyond the final urn,
To warn my friend, my spirit shall return.
Beneath the church-yard elm—at midnight—where
The cold dews drop—thou knowest—I'll meet thee there."

This is the spot, and time; I come to tread
These walks, and meet alone the enlightened dead.
He was my friend—I need not flinch or fear;
In friendship's band—the dead—the dead are dear;
No, not a hair of this sad head, would he
Injure, for kind were all his ways to me;
I fear not—I am calm—I long to know
Of worlds as yet unknown—of joy and wo.—

The hour has come, from yonder steeple's height,
Twelve times has toll'd the iron tongue of night;
The wind expires, and weary nature throws
O'er land and sea a most profound repose.
From social life I seem, and pity thrown,
A wanderer in the lonely world alone;
Like some low worm I creep along this sod,
Without a father and without a God;
Yet not alone, if vows in Heaven are heard,
If spirits faithful ever keep their word;
Alonzo, thou art true, and I shall see
One tear, all tender, yet shall fall for me.

Hark! Did a voice my listening organs seize?
Was it a spirit passing? or the breeze?
Is that a shroud that yonder stands alone?
Or, flattery buried pride, some polished stone?
The eye and treacherous ear alike betray;—
The shroud is gone—the breeze has passed away.

What change is here! What dreadful silence reigns
Along these moonlight walks and glimmering plains!
To his last mansion Rectitude is fled,
And sleeps with Falsehood in a wormy bed;
Pleasure has dashed her goblet down; and Pride
Has laid the tassel'd robe and plume aside;
Ambition here no rising impulse feels,
Nor yokes his horses to his fiery wheels;
The wicked from transgression are repressed;—
They cease from troubling and the weary rest;
The small and great are here; no lordling's breath
Molests the strict democracy of death.

Why is a terror, so peculiar, shed
O'er human hearts when walking near the dead?
How can these mouldered hands such tumults weave?
Why do the disbelieving now believe?
And why, as if by Heaven's judicial doom,
Is no man atheist, standing near a tomb?

He comes not, tho' the appointed hour is o'er;
He comes not—lives not—I shall wait no more.
Long have I forced these trembling limbs to stay,
Midst damps and silence, darkness and dismay;
The moon in lustre mild, in glory still,

Shines westward of the brow of Heaven's blue hill.
The hour is past. Let me forsake this gloom,
Nor trust the faithful sponsors of the tomb.

My doubts are all confirmed; when breath retires,
The lamp within goes out with all its fires;
Soon as we reach these beds of lasting peace,
Our schemes, our hopes, our very beings cease.
This boasted man—this child of Heaven's decree—
This sage—this reasoning angel—what is he?
A future worm—the victim of a shroud,
A streak of glory fading from a cloud.

If One all-perfect garnished yonder skies,
And bade our peopled globe from nothing rise;
If power and wisdom in his heart combine;
His high perfections in his works must shine:
So kind his character, his love so bland,
The world must bear the impress of his hand;
Each stream of influence must its channel keep;
No foot must deviate and no eye must weep.
We know the sun's refulgence by his beams;
Pellucid fountains pour pellucid streams;
So perfect goodness must salute our eyes,
In thornless roses and in cloudless skies;
If sin, or error shade this earthly sod,
The stain is deep—it reaches up to God.

What is the truth? Does pleasure harbor fear?
Does wisdom waking happiness appear?
Nature, as onward through her laws, she moves,
To all her progeny a step-dame proves;

Thrown on her iron lap, the infant lies,
Nor moves her pity by his piercing cries;
Reason is drowned in passions wailing voice,
We sin by impulse ere we sin by choice;
No soft provisions woven in her plan
For poor, abandoned, weak, degraded man:
For him, the Fates collected ills prepare,
Joy and deception—wisdom and despair.

Yet still the lonely mind looks round for aid,
Asks—hopes—distrusts—believes—is much afraid;
Whatever doubts our reason may descry,
Some startled feeling gives those doubts the lie;
Even I, the wretch, that here concluding stand,
Myself the product of no heavenly hand,
Even I, the icy space so bravely passed,
Take every step, but tremble at the last.

Suspecting then the heart—its powerful throes
Suppressed, and sinking into soft repose;
Willing without one cloud the truth to see,
Howe'er it humbles, or distresses me;
The awful theme let me review once more,
And justify my reasoning, or deplore.

If from thy breast thou bid the cloud withdraw,
Within is found a clear, commanding law;
It gives to moral life its noblest shape,
And from its sanctions none, who think, escape;
It binds our feelings with dominion strong;
It speaks of life's great end—of right and wrong;
It is a crowning garland or a rod,

It soothes or punishes—a secret God;
And all the power, that truth revealed can bring,
Meets this deep law and strikes this inward string.

Then, O thou sun of knowledge, hid in shade,
Hear the first prayer thy suppliant ever made;
If, midst the streams of joy that round thee shine,
Thine ear can listen to a voice like mine;
If, midst the rolling orbs that rule the sky,
A floating atom can arrest thine eye;
If Infinite can look on folly weak;
If dust and ashes may presume to speak:
Impart that light, which spirits ransomed see,
And make me know—THIS LAW—myself and thee.

Behold the skies; amidst her starry train
The Queen of Heaven looks down on hill and plain!
Eternal harmony is found above,
And every planet seems to twinkle love;
Deeper and deeper in the blue profound,
New suns arise; new systems circle round;
Worlds behind worlds, in vast profusion spread,
Where not a tear perhaps was ever shed;—
The scene with glorious proofs is sprinkled o'er—
A God—a God is there—let worlds adore.

Behold our earth—how wonderfully made!
Sweet interchange appears of light and shade!
Here the tall cliff collects the ærial rain;
There the full river pours it through the plain;
Here the high cedar spreads its nobler arms;
There the low lily hides its humbler charms;

Fairest Spring, in garments green, leads on the year,
Then russet Summer's ripening fruits appear;—
What sights and sounds of bliss are poured around!
The quail's wild note, the robin's morning sound,
The mock-bird copying every tuneful bill,
And the low dirges of the whippowil!
The hayman haply when his toil is done,
The insect cohorts wheeling in the sun;—
Even Autumn's faded leaf, and Winter loud,
Present the beauties to the storm and cloud:
We witness changing greens, and snows embossed,
And hardly own that Paradise is lost.

Yet, thus endowed, with all desire can crave,
Man holds the throne, a sufferer and a slave;
In vain the flowers their richest sweets prepare;
He wanders through his Eden in despair:
The table spread, he hungers yet; the burst
Of water meets him, and he dies with thirst.

In this condition, where afflictions roll,
Religion is an impulse of the soul;
'Tis closely grafted on chastised desire;
Our wants impress it—even our sins inspire;
And skeptic reasoning is a vain employ,
Like reasoning down our sorrow, or our joy.

Here then I rest; this dark, divided mind
From all its wandering here repose may find:
As when Columbus left the orient shore,
To plough the waters never ploughed before;
Still as the day to night her throne resigned,
A deeper darkness rested on his mind;

More angry tempests drove the midnight clouds,
And strange-voiced demons shrieked around his shrouds;
Far darker billows seemed, in ranks, to roll,
And even the lying needle left the pole;
Oft, oft looked out the eye, and nothing ken'd,
And none could gather where the voyage could end;
Till just as watery ruin threatened there,
And Hope deferred was changing to despair,
One rising morning a new scene unfurled,
And joy, successful, hailed another world;—
Thus every doubt and every billow past,
My wounded spirit rests in God at last.

Eternal Father, whose pervading breath
Awakes the blossoms from the dust of death,
Whose influence trembles in the morning beam,
Rolls on the cloud and murmurs in the stream;
All objects speak thy power—below—above,
Power ruled by wisdom and combined with love;
When winter drives his angry car along,
Thy praise is uttered in the dreadful song;
When Spring returning, decks her grassy shrine,
Her flowers, her breezes, and her blooms are thine;
Whatever glories in the heavens we trace,
Are faint reflections of thy brighter face;
Could these illumined eyes, more vigorous grown,
Pierce through the veil of heaven and see thy throne,
Could I, replenished with a saint's delight,
Behold the object, not of faith, but sight;
Not more conviction would be then impressed,
Than now possesses this believing breast;

Nor is thy goodness less than being proved,
Goodness by noblest angels most beloved;
Thy laws with silent influence wide extend,
The bad afflicting and the good befriend;
In every region, brightened by the sun,
The outlines of thy kingdom are begun;
Unchanging Wisdom shall complete the plan,
And all be perfect in immortal man.
When wretched man on ruin's waves was tossed,
When innocence and Eden both were lost;
When, exiled from his God, he wandered round,
Where thorns and thistles sprinkled all the ground:
In pity to a wretch, by choice undone,
Thou sendest deliverance by thy sacred Son.

Then, if thou findest Religion's path obscure,
If passions blind thee, or if vice allure;
If angel-voices call in vain to save,
And all thy visions darken o'er the grave;
Still one sweet truth unshaken must remain—
—*Ask thine own heart and nothing is so plain.**

O precious system! blessed, bleeding tree!
Red with the balm compassion shed for me!
In mercy to an animated clod,
God sinks to man, that man may soar to God.
Guilt wears the robe of innocence; the tear,
Once wholly hopeless, turns to rapture here;
The wretched share a part; and round the bed,
Where life retires, immortal hopes are shed;

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* Pope.

Life's disappointments, agonies and stings,
But add new feathers to Religion's wings.

So, in the cell, where stern afflictions' prey,
The prisoner weeps his lingering nights away;
Through the dark grate, whose iron chords so fast,
Have been the lyre to many a midnight blast;
Through that dark grate, the evening sun may shine,
And gild his walls with crimson light divine;
Some mournful melody may soothe his pain;
Some radiant beam may sparkle round his chain;
Some wandering wind in mercy may repair,
And waft the spirit of the blossoms there.

THE PURITAN.

No. 14.

Oh! then the longest Summer's day
Seemed too, too much in haste; still the full heart
Had not imparted half; 'twas happiness
Too exquisite to last. Of joys departed,
Not to return, how painful the remembrance!

The Grave.

GREAT and manifold is the grief, which I have been compelled to feel, O candid reader, in being obliged to spend so much time in talking on paper concerning myself and family. How distressing this must be to a modest man, thou canst better conceive than I describe. It is an act of self-denial to which I have submitted for thy advantage. Pride, I abjure; egotism, I detest; and the very sin I have committed, I have been witness against and lament. And thus, having used no less than seven great I's in this very paragraph, and groaned over my own sin with a hearty sorrow; like other offenders, I now return to it again, and proceed to tell thee more about my family and myself.

My uncle Gideon was a little spindle-shanked man, whom the wind might have blown away. In his early youth, he was supposed to be in a consumption, and spent most of his time in visits to a certain botanical doctor, in a town about ten miles off, who kept him along between wind and water, never permitting him to be well, and never to die, until my grandfather's purse, as well as patience, was almost exhausted; for he held that neither to kill or cure was the great reproach of medicine. Some of the prescriptions of this famous doctor, I remember; and will here record them for the benefit of all my readers, who happen to be in a consumption. They are such as these:—the last strippings of a red cow's milk, taken morning and night, (the cow must be red;) the root of elecampane, coddled in sugar-baker's molasses, to be taken at night whenever you wake up and cough; ground-ivy tea, sweetened with loaf-sugar, to be drank any time whenever your imagination is thirsty, (much better than brandy;) and a conserve made of red roses, very healing to the stomach, when overloaded with repletion; especially if accompanied with fasting. These prescriptions I have heard my uncle Gideon praise so much, that I thought it my duty to preserve them; and who knows, but my book may be famous for medicine, as well as morality; so that if I fail in one object, I may succeed in another. No man need to starve in New England, who has abilities enough to become a botanical doctor.

These diseases and medicine kept my uncle from active life; so that he grew up a home-bred youth, with a powerful imagination, a decent mind, but as ignorant of the ways of the world, as an oyster in his shell. He was a great reader, a great eater, a great physic-taker; but not a great man, for I before told you he was a very little one. I can seem to see him now, a mannikin about four feet two inches high; his hat cocked on his head; his crooked elbows swinging as he walked, until they almost touched behind his back, his blue serge small clothes, fastened by oval knee-buckles, his double-breasted waistcoat and his long chocolate-colored coat, three quarters as long as himself, and reaching down to the place where the calves of his legs *should have been*, if he had had any. Such was the man whose life was one long dream; and who sometimes infused his visions with my youthful brains.

In my grandfather's house, my uncle kept a room somewhat between a study and shop, where he used to read his books, and sometimes pursue such handicrafts as his leisure or health were supposed to admit of. He had a lapstone, and could mend a pair of shoes; he was sometimes seen repairing an old saddle, putting in a rake handle, or puttying the glass of a broken window. He was one of those people, who are always busy, and never bring much to pass. On the negative side he shone immensely; never doing intentional harm to a single creature; no, not

even to the musquito, who tried in vain to suck his blood.

Thus secluded from the world, and left a prey to his own thoughts, it is not wonderful, if in the absence of other interests, my uncle should be deeply in love. Some fair face was forever setting his heart on fire; and even when sober fifty began to shed its discreet snows among the black locks of his little head, his brain and his heart were as susceptible as ever—perpetually lighted up by the fire caught from the malicious eye of some nymph of sixteen. His affections were always wandering to some false loon of a lass; to whom for age he might have been a grandfather; and though he was a religious man, he seldom came from meeting on the Sabbath, but his language and looks expressed the influence of other faces than those, which *glow in souls divine.* In short, the poor man's heart was tender, and Bundleborough meeting-house was a magazine of sparks.

It is dangerous to live with a valetudinary man. I had heard so much in my youth about coughs and consumption, of suitable and unsuitable diet, of things healing to the stomach, of ground-ivy tea, red cow's milk, and elecampane, that I, in my turn, began to be sick too; and as I was blessed with a will, and was generally allowed to gratify it, I became too feeble to go to school. The deficiency of public instruction was supplied by what I could learn in my uncle Gideon's chamber.

There we studied together; and there he was pleased to teach just such wisdom as I was pleased to learn. Never was there a more pleasant instructor, or a less tyrannical school. We read together Salmon's Geography, Robertson's History of Greece, Goldsmith's Rome, Don Quixote and Gil Blas. My dear uncle taught me the mathematics; I went through the rules of addition, subtraction, multiplication and scratch division, together with the other mode of performing that useful rule. I was not more than six months, (besides making four slings, harnessing two pair of skates, and fixing three sleds,) in learning the multiplication table; in short, in the estimation of my grandfather's family, I bid fair to be a wonderful mathematician; had not an unlucky accident, blown in by the cross wind of fortune, determined me to be irrevocably a poet.

> What due offence from amorous causes springs,
> What mighty contests rise from trivial things?

As my uncle's regimen may teach a new course of medicine, so his shop or chamber may open a new plan of education. I will tell the truth.

I had cyphered according to the good maxim *festina lenté*, as far as vulgar fractions, when one day my uncle being absent, I came to a question which posed all my powers, and brought me to a dead set. After performing the operation every way, it would not come out any thing like the printed answer;

it was evident the book must be wrong, or I was wrong; and as I then had no idea that there could be a lie in print, I was very distrustful of my own calculations. My uncle had already given me a lecture for idleness; and it was expected at least that one *sum* should be finished on his return. What could I do? Like a bard in distress, I had recourse to the Muses; and wrote on my slate, the following lines, not without some faint resemblance to an anacreontic which I had read in our Almanac.

'Tis hard to cypher, I am sure;
But O! 'tis harder to endure,
The anguish of a wounded heart,
When Cupid's arrows make it smart.

No language can express the astonishment with which these lines were read. Applauses rung through all the rooms of Oldbug house; my grandfather, aunt Hannah, even David, swelled the chorus. That a boy only twelve years old should produce such lines! Amazing! unparalleled! As for my uncle Gideon, he knew too well what *Cupid's arrows* were, not to admire. From that moment away went dull prose and mathematics; and we gave ourselves up to all the sublimities of love and poetry. Early in the morning, late at night, we were found in the little chamber, under the back chimney, courting the Muses. I wrote, and my uncle corrected; there were produced rebusses, acrostics, anagrams, on all the beauties of

our village on whom my uncle's eyes had strayed. Never was a young bard encouraged by more enthusiastic admiration; though I must confess, judging of my poetry by its effects, I have no reason for self-gratulation; for it never softened the hearts of one of the beauties with whom my uncle was in love. My verses and his eloquence were alike ineffectual; the poor man died an old bachelor. But what can be expected from the hard hearts of modern women, especially when addressed by a shrivelled bachelor of fifty! They would be too hard for Orpheus himself.

Reader, if you have one son, and wish to make him a sober, practical man, never suffer him to be brought up at his grandpa's, nor install his uncle over him as a schoolmaster. They will ruin him without intending it; for though I there learned much that was excellent, yet, there also —— but what avail excuses and reflections. My faults are my own; and the only lesson they can now teach me, is, humility and repentance.

THE PURITAN.

No. 15.

The current, that with gentle murmur glides,
Thou knowest being stopped impatiently doth rage;
But when his fair course is not hindered,
He makes sweet music with the enamel'd stones;
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge,
He overtakes thee in his pilgrimage;
And so by many winding nooks he strays,
With willing sport to the wild ocean—

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

I FIND on reviewing my last number, that I have fallen into such a train of reflections as I have often heard and condemned in others. Such is the eagerness with which the mind flies from its own errors, that almost every man finds something to condemn in his own education. It was too severe, too lax, too religious, or too sensual, and he reposes on the excuse that he was injured or spoiled before he came to the years of discretion. Vain endeavors! The real fault lies where we are not willing to find it.

In this age, education has become a science; and,

I fear, a whole generation will be spoiled by its perfections. If books can teach man this duty, certainly no being need to complain. We have them of all sizes, from the ponderous octavo with its double volumes, down to the penny pamphlet, all entering into the minutest article, and undertaking to make virtuous masters and misses almost by mechanical skill. One teaches us that we must procure nurses of a good natured countenance, because the temper of the infant is often soured by a bad usage; another proposes to banish from our young libraries all the little tales of fiction, which have amused children for ages, because these books, being untrue, may teach our children to lie; one great philosopher thinks that fables with speaking trees and reasoning brutes, are supremely pernicious; and we have volumes on volumes written with the best intention to force on the minds of youth prematurely the intricate articles of some system of theology. Wasted labor! Education in my opinion is a very simple business. It is like eloquence; so far as *specifics* are concerned, there are ten thousand ways of accomplishing the same end. To educate your children well, you must in the first place have plain, honest, hearty, good intentions; you must exhibit a good example, have an orderly family, and feel yourself and set before them the motives of the Christian religion. This is the whole secret. Theory there is none; and those who pretend to it, desire more to sell their books than to profit mankind. If

you have a sincere desire to do your children good, you need not measure every step, you need not deal out your words by the balance, you need not labor to repress your own innocent peculiarity; but let the current of your affections flow free, and it will certainly bear their character and your own to virtue and happiness.

About a mile from my grandfather's, over on the *other* road, there lived a family, of whom every body foretold the children would be spoiled. They had a host of them; Mrs. Bumblebee having borne her husband sixteen children, all of them as dirty as pigs, and as hale and hearty. She was a woman of a good easy disposition, and the most consummate slut I ever knew! nor was her husband of a very different spirit. They never whipped their children; hardly ever frowned on them; and, when they went to school, it was more by coaxing than by authority or force. When the children were about twelve years old, I must confess they did appear about undone—certainly they comported with no theoretic perfection that I ever saw sketched by any book-making philosopher. But after all, Mr. Bumblebee and his wife were people of principle. They were always familiar with their children; they talked and laughed and romped and joked and read and prayed with them; and, in the latter part of their juvenile years, there was a recovering power. They all became eminently pious; ornaments to their country and blessings to their parents;

and what is very remarkable, the four daughters of this queen of the sluts, were the neatest young ladies in all Bundleborough. I have seen them walk to meeting, when their well-crisped vandykes seemed to be too white and spotless to be emblems of any thing but the purity of their hearts.

Of all the miserable beings, whom God in his inscrutable providence has submitted to the dominion and caprice of others, I pity, most, the child who is brought up by that parent, whose views never extend beyond the surface, and whose hand and heart move only in obedience to a superficial system. The child must come in before company with just such a step, put his hat in just such a place, sit in just such a posture, return premature answers to premature questions, repress all the generous, spontaneous impulses of nature; and, in short, become a little hypocrite in order to be good. I have seen such children, they go like clock-work, and must be wound up once a day in order to go. At the age of twelve or fourteen, such a child, especially if it have no passions and is a great dissembler, is all that aunt Betty or Kitty could wish. Every one praises, though nobody can love him.

> He speaks, behaves, and looks just as he ought,
> But never, never reached one generous thought.

I have seldom known such children turn out well. They are little machines, wound up for the

occasion; and are wholly worthless when they pass into this world of voluntary vice and virtue.

One of the great impediments to a good education is, that separation in interest and feeling, which arises between the hearts of children and parents, when the former first begin to mingle with the world. This is sure to be the case when the parent is distant and austere. To influence your children to aught that is good, you must retain their confidence; they must fly to you as a friend; they must see in a parent a grave companion, and must have no joys or sorrows, in which they are not willing to allow you to share a parental part. You must make home the happiest place they can find; and your presence a restraint on their vices, without being a restraint on their joys. Such a habitation is like a skilful orchard with the trees set wide apart—they have room to drink the luxuriance of nature; to follow her promptings and grow in her strength; to toss their branches in the air, and feel the quickening fire of the sun.

The captious reader will pervert these remarks, if he infers they are intended to discountenance all severity. I cannot distrust experience; I dare not contradict Scripture. A rod is as necessary an implement of discipline in a family, as a prison is in a community; and to exclude it professedly in theory, only makes it more necessary in practice. But in domestic discipline, always let the moral go before the coactive and forceable; let punishment begin when persuasion

must cease. Never build on fear when you can work by love.

The main design of these remarks is to show that so far as subordinate things are concerned, (the chief things which fill up our pretty volumes on this subject,) there are multitudes of ways which, regulated by the general spirit of virtue, will be equally successful; that much must be left to voluntary reason; and that no mind can be worse educated than that which is educated too much. I abhor the tree that grows, like a fan, nailed to a wall.

If the reader will take the trouble to go up to the lantern of our State House, he will find in the prospect an apt illustration. There he will see many roads all leading to the heart of the city; and which you should choose, depends on your position and place, and the style you design to enter it. If you are in Brookline, and intend to ride in, in your elegant barouche, you will probably roll along, in stately grandeur, through the western avenue to the bottom of Beacon street. If you are at Newton, you will be likely to take the rail-road. At Chelsea, you may find a sail in the steam-boat; but rather than not reach the city at all, on a pressing occasion, you had better hobble over the rotten bridge, that adorns the waters and overlooks the mud-scows at the South End.

THE PURITAN.

No. 16.

And Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father.

Bible.

KEEPING UP APPEARANCES.

Just one mile, two furlongs and seven rods from my grandfather's house, on a sightly hill called *Mount Pleasant*, stood the abode of Jonathan Oldbug, my father; in whose spacious but decaying mansion, I spent part of my time; for I would not have the reader imagine that my parents were always so negligent as to leave me perpetually to write rebusses with my uncle Gideon, or to eat turn-overs from the hand of my aunt Hannah.

My father was a tall, stately man, with one good coat, which he kept to wear to meeting; one decent pair of shoes, which lasted, in my memory, seven years; one cotton shirt, with a linen collar to it,

and he was sometimes compelled to lie in bed, in order that it might be washed. He dwelt in a large house, whose exterior, though not splendid, was much preferable to some of the rooms within; it was surrounded by a white fence with some of the parts broken down; a front gate swinging on one hinge; several of the window panes were broken; on two of the front windows swung two shattered blinds, which had once been green; and before the house, as you entered the garden, grew two spacious lime trees, forming a grateful shade. As you entered the house, you came to a large, massy, oak door, big enough to be the gate of a castle, with an iron knocker on it, shaped for a lion but looking more like a dog; and as you entered the building, you saw a front entry, the paper torn and colored by the rain; on your left hand was one room covered with a carpet, containing an eight-day clock, reaching from the floor to the ceiling, and telling the age of the moon; the other furniture passable; but the rest of the rooms in a condition which I blush to name. There, in this stately mansion, dwelt my venerable sire, who might justly be denominated a *poor gentleman;* that is, he was a *gentleman* in his own estimation, and *poor* in the esteem of every body else.

My father was a man of expedients, and had spent his whole life, and exhausted all his ingenuity, in that adroit presentation of pretences, which, in common speech, is called keeping up appearances. In this

art he was really skilful; and I often suspected then, and have really concluded since, if he had turned half the talent to procuring an honest livelihood, which he used to slobber over his ill-dissembled poverty, it would have been better for his soul and body both. He was a man that never told a lie, unless it was *to keep up appearances.*

I forewarn the reader that I am now entering on the tragic part of my story, and if he has sympathy or pity for me, I hope he will bestow it here. I know how hard-hearted the world is to such miseries, and I hope none of my readers will be so unfeeling as to smile as they peruse this paper. Still, much as I value the sympathy of a kindred heart, I will not be so cruel as to hope any of my readers have been taught such afflictions by experience. I hope none who hold this book, have been reduced to the miserable necessity of tying up their pantaloons with packthread, instead of lawful suspenders; of using a remnant of a pillow-casé for a pocket-handkerchief; of sticking a bur on their rent stocking to cover up a hole; and after slitting their worn pantaloons on the knee, when they had got half way to meeting on the Sabbath, of being obliged to tie a pretended pocket-handkerchief over a pretended wound, seeming to be lame, and perhaps before they had walked ten rods, forgetting in which leg the lameness was seated. No, these are the incommunicable sorrows of me, of me the sad hero of a sad family; the prince and

heir-apparent to the ragged generation. To me, and to me alone, was reserved the awful destiny of being invited to a party, where were to assemble the first beauties of a country village—not daring to go until evening, lest the light of heaven should expose a threadbare coat—having no clean shirt—not even a dickey which had not been worn ten times—supplying its place with a piece of writing paper—afraid to turn my head lest the paper should rattle or be displaced—and then just as a poor wretch was exulting in the hope, that the stratagems of poverty were to pass undetected, to have a lady, perhaps the youngest and most beautiful in the whole party, come provokingly near, and beg to examine your collar, because she admires the pattern. Often has it been my lot to return home from the company, where all hearts seemed to bound with gladness, to water my couch with tears, amid sorrows which I could tell to none, and with which none would sympathize. I thought it poverty. But I was mistaken. It was something else which begins with a P.

And then the awkward apologies to which one is reduced in such a situation, come very near to a mendacious violation of real verity. O how often have I seen my honored father put to his trumps, steering between Scylla and Charybdis, adroitly adjusting his language so as to make an impression, without incurring a lie, and reduced to shifts by which none were deceived, because all understood

them. Once on a time, after a week's starvation to procure a velvet collar for my father's best coat, we were sitting down to a dinner of hastypudding and molasses, when, unluckily, one of our neighbors happened to walk in without knocking, (a very improper act,) and we had no time to slip away the plates and table-cloth ; we were taken in the very fact. I never saw my poor father more confounded. A hectic flush passed over his long, sallow cheek, like the last, sad bloom on the visage of a consumptive man. He looked, for a moment, almost like a convicted criminal; but, however, he soon recovered himself, and returned to his expedients. "We thought," said he, "we would have a plain dinner to-day ; always to eat roast turkeys, makes one sick." There was no disputing this broad maxim. But happy would it have been for our ill-fated family, if there had been no sickness among its members, either of the head or heart, but such as is produced by eating roasted turkey.

In our town, at the period of my boyhood, the severity of puritan manners was relaxing into a species of gentility ; and though my father and mother never went to balls and theatres, they were very fond of evening parties, where, after cards and conversation, they closed their enjoyments with an elegant supper. But, O at what an expense on our poor purse, were these pleasures bought! Once, I remember, to buy my mother's muslin gown, we sold

our pig, our only pig, and our only hope of animal food through the winter. And mark the malice of mankind, when you are trying to tower over them! The very next week were written by a piece of chalk, on the door of Bob Gill's gristmill, the following lines, where every body could read them. They were the production of some cruel, country wit, whom I could almost have murdered, had I known him.

> A pig is raised for food;—it makes you stare
> To know that pigs are ever raised to wear;
> But madam Oldbug puts her brains to rack,
> And wears her pig, transformed, upon her back.

How the writer came to know the fact, I never could guess; only that hypocrisy, in poverty as well as in religion, is seldom long successful. Sometimes my mother would borrow her shawl at one place, and her tippet at another, and her cap at a third. Often would they come home late at night, on a winter evening, without a spark of fire on the hearth, or wood to kindle it; my mother shivering in her airy dress; I was sent down cellar to pull off the boards from the potato crib, or to bring up an old flour barrel, to light a transient flame, blazing and dying, like the fading joys on which our hearts were set. Sometimes we would pull down one part of the house to warm the other, so that the old mansion was made to perform a double office, yielding us at once shelter and fuel.

Yet my father, with all his expedients, was a very unpopular man. Though he was always angling for public favor, he never had skill enough to put on the bait so as to conceal the hook, even to the gudgeons that floated in our shallow streams. There was a broken bridge near our habitation, and one year he was plotting and expecting to be surveyor of the highways, that he might mend it for the public convenience, at the public expense. He was disappointed; and old Mr. Slider, his rival and enemy, was put in the office, who suffered the bridge to remain unrepaired, with the ungenerous sarcasm, that a man who lived in such a shattered house, might well endure to ride over a rotten bridge. There was a militia company, and my father was expecting to be chosen captain, especially as he had been in the revolutionary army, and had actually spoken to Gen. Washington. But, at the age of forty-one, they chose him orderly-sergeant; which office my father refused, declaring, with much spitting and sputtering, that he would never serve his ungrateful country again. Thus closed his military honors; he was reduced to the necessity of finding *the post of virtue in a private station.*

I have heard that the only way to cure ambition, is to starve it to death; and all the world seemed to combine, to remove my father's favorite passion by that unwelcome medicine. Once we had determined to have a large party at our house, and we desired to

get it up in our very best style. We had invited all the grandees of Bundleborough, esquire Wilson, and his one-eyed daughter; Mrs. Butterfly, a retired milliner; Mrs. Redrose, a jolly widow; Mr. Wallflower, a broken merchant; and captain Casket, supposed to be a pensioner on the king of Great Britain. We had raked and scraped, and twisted and turned, to procure all the money we could; my mother had sold pickled mangoes; I was sent to pick up mushrooms, in the great pasture; my father disposed of about two tons of old salt hay, the remaining wheel of an old ox-cart, all his pumpkins and turnips, and of about half his indian corn, to make up the sum of fifteen dollars, thirty-seven and a half cents, with which we were to shine out for one evening at least, in all the peacock-feathers with which ingenious poverty could cover over its hide-bound, frost-bitten, hunger-wasted frame. We sent for all the china and glass we could beg or borrow; and Mr. Planewell, the carpenter, was summoned to repair our front-gate, set up the fence, and new lay the step before the front-door; but, as there was very little prospect of his ever being paid, he could not come. Two of the legs of our dining-table were broken, and I was ordered to glue them; but, failing in that, I remember I tied them together with a piece of fish-line, which was to be concealed by the depending table-cloth. The table-cloth itself, was of the finest and nicest damask; but, unluckily, there was a thin spot in the middle of it,

almost verging to a hole; but this we could conceal, by the mat on which we laid the great dish in the centre. My mother had spent the previous week in preparation—keeping the whole house in confusion, washing, scouring, cleaning, adjusting the best chamber, where the ladies were to take off their bonnets, mending the carpet, and polishing the shovel and tongs; and, I must confess, considering her means, she put things in tolerable order. An old half-blind negro woman, by the name of *Joice*, who had formerly waited on parties, but was now nearly superannuated, was to come and assist us; and it was stipulated that she should have the fragments of the feast, for her pay. The evening came, the company assembled; our old barn-lantern, with one broken and three cracked glasses, was hung up in the entry for an introductory light; our turkey, our chickens, our jellies, and our cards were prepared. *Joice* was busy, my mother was directing, and all were happy. But let no man hereafter pronounce an evening blessed, before the hour of supper has closed. *Joice* had complained already, that she wanted *things to do with;* and on the narrow table in the kitchen, she had overturned a lamp, and oiled the bottom of the great dish, on which the turkey was to be presented on the supper table. It became slippery, her fingers were slippery, and she was half blind; as she came waddling into the supper room, with the treasures of her cookery, she stumbled, struck the poor spliced legs

of our dining-table; my patchwork gave way, down went the table, dishes and sauces, on the ladies' gowns, down went poor Joice in the midst of them; my fish-line was revealed, the torn place in the table-cloth was seen, torn still more disastrously; my father looked aghast, my mother was in tears, and the whole company were in confusion. My father, however, tried to jump out of his condition, like a cat out of a corner. "Plague take Mr. Hardwood, our cabinet-maker; I had just ordered a new table, but he never sends home his work in time." In saying this, I can bear witness, that my honored father did not tell a lie; he told just half the truth. He *had* ordered a new table; and Mr. Hardwood had *not* sent it to us in time; but then he distinctly told my father the reason; and that was, he should not send it, until he settled off the old score.

"O poverty, poverty," says Cervantes, "a man must have a great share of the grace of God, who can bring himself to be contented with thee. Why dost thou choose to pinch gentlemen?" Yes, I must allow, poverty is bad enough; but not so terrible when it comes alone. It may then bring peace and resignation by its side, and even lead contentment and virtue in its train. In such cases, it is probation, instruction, wisdom, improvement, religion. The great and good, in all ages, have submitted to it; and suffering heroes have sometimes made it their boast and glory. But Heaven defend me, and the

souls of all my tribe, from the mingled horrors of pride and poverty, when they come upon us together! In the language of our own Wigglesworth, I may say:—

It is a main great ocean
Withouten bank or bound;
A deep abyss, wherein there is
No bottom to be found.

THE PURITAN.

No. 17.

— Trifles form the sum of human things,
And half our misery from our folly springs.
Hannah More.

If we listen to the voice of experience speaking, whether through the organ of those high and brave spirits, who contemplate the connection of our sorrows and joys, seen in a long course from the hill-top of contemplation and wisdom, or changing the conduit of our instruction, we choose to derive our information from a near but humble spring, even the testimony and ocular demonstration of our own private views of life in all its passing and ever-changing varieties and translations, we shall find, to our mortification and sorrow, that the highest promises of fortune are hollow, and that man was made to mourn, even when sitting on the heap of accumulations abundant. That misery is universal, I affirm not; that the picture has not been overcharged by some moral paint-

ers, more willing to produce a tragic impression, than to copy the lines of simple verity, and the colors of real life, I most gladly concede. In youth we are full of expectations, hopes, promises, false surmises, imaginations as one would, borrowing from the future to be paid with the usury of tasksome experience; we imagine our painted skiff is taking us to the golden mountains of Plutus, and preparing for us the myrrhine cups of Setine and Falernian wine, to be quaffed in never coming satiety; whenas the black streams of heart-sore vanity, and disappointed ambition, are bearing us to the sterile wastes of dear bought knowledge, where not a reed is found to whistle in the wind.

Yet concerning the miseries of man, arising like the waves of the sea after a tempestuous east wind, I find our learned doctors on these themes, are divided into two sections or parties, whereof it may become our subject to discourse a little. Learned Cicero informs, in that tractate wherein he discourses of the miseries of old age, to be borne by the few who survive the accidents of sicknesses, of youth and middle life, that, all its evils, lightened by wisdom, are to be carried with an equal mind. He draws altogether a pleasant and joyous picture of human life; reconciling us to our being by the dictates of philosophy, and vindicating the order of nature, which is regulated by Providence, from the aspersions which malignant foolishness casteth thereon. It is grievous to

remember, that these comfortable conclusions are contravened by men claiming to be Christians, whose sour dispositions overshadow all the seeds of grace. The pagan blancheth the image of life; the Christian covers it with mud and weeds, rotted by the perverted rain.

Human life, to him looking thereon with unbiased heart and clarified disposition, is like a spring, which is beautiful or otherwise as you use it. It is silver and sweet, if suffered to flow in its own purity; if no beast dippeth the foot in its surface to disturb its bottom; no boar out of the wood, defileth its waters; if no branch, swung by the tempest, stirreth up its sediment, or breaks the purity of its glassy surface. But loathsome and foul, and vaporous and unhealthy will the very air of heaven become around it, oppressing the source of life and offending the very nostrils of those that breathe therein will it be, if one, changing its nature, turn it from a spring to a bog.

He is but a youngling in life, who does not perceive that our sharpest sorrows arise from vanity, sore with scores of wounds. It is our bleeding pride, that makes us miserable; our soiled plumes, our cropped feathers, our torn ribbons, our blotted escutcheons, our starved ambition. Great sorrows are often the ill-starred progeny of little things. The head of the Nile, is a puddle in Abyssinia; and of the Amazon, a mountain stream. The tears of man and woman also, may stream over an onion as well as at the

funeral of a child. The host of our sorrows become more sorrowful yet, and magnified, because we deem ourselves bound to bury them in a discreet silence.

By some, whose blockish minds hardly penetrate from the altitude of the tree that blossoms in the air to the secret depth of the root which supports it below, it is misaffirmed, that humility, our enjoined guide through the paths and perils of mistrustful life, is a cruel step-dame, which leads us only to the delved-out valley, cold, rocky, mountain-bound, and sun-forsaken, where the snows of winter fall early and last long, and where scarce a blessed flower is seen to grow. Foolish souls! They see not the high wisdom of Providence, who, in commanding man his duty, consulted his peace. If pride wounds, humility heals; if pride leads us to the rock's brow only to cast us down and rejoice in our fall, humility comes like a pitiful matron, takes us up, pities us in our low estate, bandages our broken limbs, and closes our galling wounds, by stanching the blood, and pouring in from her bountiful horn, the rills of wine and oil. Humility is like a sprig of evergreen, which grows in the nook of the rock on the southern side of a spreading ridge, never shaken by the east wind, never nipt by winter, though they vex the oak or strip it of all its honors, when most lofty and green.

But what is humility? Ay, there you falter; there your conscience takes the bribe. You can see every man's pride but your own; you also admire humility

in all action except when it comes to trim and prune your own life. Then, you question; then, you doubt and founder; then, you fill your heart with false visions, and your lips with idle excuses. Self-honesty, is of all blessings most rare. Take the book of personal experience, read over the thick-written pages of your personal beauty or deformity; of your poverty or wealth, and how you have gotten it; your actions and their motives; your omissions and excuses therefor; your hours of amusement and sleep; your daily slumbers, and your midnight vigils; your faults of tempers, and merits by blindness allowed; your tenor of life as a father, husband, brother, or son; as a citizen, neighbor, or private man; your secret thoughts, and careless speeches; your aspirings and fallings; your hopes and purposes; your plans and the execution of them; your sins, budding or blown, to God, to man and yourself;—read over these, I say, with a watchful eye, and a remembering bosom, even to the last page and appendix of the volume; read them with acknowledged sorrow and purposed amendment; and half the evils of life will be lost—half! nay, all will be softened—and thou shall dwell amidst sublunary tribulations, as it were the next door to heaven!

Blessed be the hour when one heart at least discovered this comfortable truth! Blessed the hour, which showed the at-first-painful light, coming increased and reflected, from the bleeding tree of sal-

vation. Then the toys and plumes of the man-child took their proper place; and, when little more happiness was expected from these baubles, then another day-star arose to usher in the light of another sun. The man of humility can write gramercy at the bottom of the page of every day's diurnal. The fountain thereof was so great, that it jetted out in streams of poetical running; and, candid reader, the first fruits, wherein I hope the heart prompts the fantasy, shall be given to thee.

Man, wretched man, was never made
In pride or power to place his trust;
His dwelling, is the lowly shade;
His home—his shelter is the dust.

Those hapless hearts, that highest soar,
The widest range of misery see;—
Know this—you need to learn no more—
That wisdom is humility.

In deepest vales the flowers display
The fairest hues, the world around;
The jewel, lurking in the clay,
We seek by looking on the ground.

Of heaven, if you would reach a gleam,
On humblest objects fix your eyes;
So travellers, on a picturing stream,
Look down indeed, but see the skies.

THE PURITAN.

No. 18.

O, most gentle Jupiter!—what tedious homily of love have you wearied your parishioners withal, and never cried, *Have patience, good people.*

As you like it.

VERY curious is it to remark how in proportion to the despotism of the government, and the fixedness of religious and other opinions, is the changeless condition in which people are retained in the profession to which they are supposed to be born. In Hindostan, a shudra never can rise from his station; he is chained down to it by all the restraints of opinion and custom. In Germany, the ranks of society are a little less restricted; and in Great Britain, the freest country in Europe, we begin to find the career of enterprise; and it scarcely surprises us, that one of their prime ministers was the son of an actress; though even there, a man is generally found in age in the profession, which was the choice of his youth. But in New England, society is like a troubled sea;

all its elements mix and ferment; the high sink, and the low rise; and no man knows how soon his laurels may fade, or his disgraces be turned into glory.

Of all this, the life of poor John Oldbug has been a striking instance. When I left my father and grandfather's houses, (between which I used to alternate, like a Canadian goose between the northern and southern skies,) I was sent into Boston, to stand behind a counter, and measure silks and tape to the ladies. There I was taught to tell shop-lies; to receive the ladies with my best bow and my polite smile; to fold over the goods with my polished fingers; and to assure the gulls, who were credulous enough to believe me, that on special occasions, and to favorite customers, we sold our articles cheaper than we bought them. On Saturday night, I was permitted to fly, like an uncaged bird, to the country, to display my new plumes in the sight of my brother rustics, and to show how much the city had polished my manners. To this life, I was destined by my honest father, who had such a taste for the superficial genteel. However, it lasted not long. Two years completed my miseries; I became sick of the business, sick of my master, and sick of myself. I have often wondered I did not become a woman-hater. To be compelled, hour after hour, to turn over half the goods in the shop; and after racking your conscience to tell the best story possible, to have nothing bought! —"I thank you, Sir; put up your goods; I will call

again." O misery! Lawyers lie; but they lie to some purpose. But for a shopkeeper, the wave of opulence breaks, ere it reaches him, and throws him nothing, but the vitious foam.

Now I resolved to be a scholar; and went to Andover to finish my studies. It was a great transition. Boston and Andover! It was like passing from a dancing school to a funeral. But I must speak well of that serious place. There I drank deep at the fountains of classical knowledge. Our mild instructor, Mr. Newman, whose virtue won us as his learning guided, was not more the master than the father of all his pupils. Every shade in that sober town, even the wild pasture where the pupils were wont to wander to feast on whortleberries, is connected with some pleasing and useful recollection.

> It is the spot,
> We ne'er forget, though there we are forgot.

Then came college-life under the tuition of Dr. Dwight. I can seem to see that venerable tutor now, in the eyes of a burning memory, as he entered the lecture room; his large frame, his firm tread, his head a little inclined forward, his hat on his breast, his green spectacles, his white-top-boots, and the solemn and paternal air with which he took the chair, at the head of the hall by the old fireplace, to deal out those instructions, so animated and yet so

useful, as even to make the sound of the dinner-bell almost unwelcome! Though neither a poet, nor metaphysician, nor a scholar, nor an orator, in the highest and exclusive sense of those terms, he yet always poured out a mass of good sense, which stamped him as the great man; and with many of his maxims, I hope to sprinkle my humble page; for unless I collect them they will be lost forever.

After leaving college, I spent some time, like other young men, in a bewildered state; not knowing exactly what to do. The choice of a profession is no small affair, as it reduces many an ingenuous youth to the borders of despair. During this state of suspense, I took two journies to the eastward (i. e. the then District of Maine) to measure wild land; went one voyage to the West Indies, as a kind of half supercargo, and spent one year in the house of a southern nabob, as a teacher to his children, amid the black slaves of the high sons of liberty. In all these conditions, I had my eyes open. I watched the follies and virtues of mankind; and having no business of my own, I learned how to direct that of other people, in that blessed separation of theory from practice, which, in religion and morality, forms the glory and the goodness of the present age.

After this, I betook myself to the study of divinity. For three years I preached, but never received a *call;* which was a mystery I never could explain. Greek and Latin I had in abundance; my character

was unimpeached; I put as much good sense and divinity into the only sermon I ever wrote, as I was master of; but yet no people saw fit to invite me to a settlement. To be sure, some people were pleased to say I was eccentric, but what that means, I never could find out. After riding, with my saddle-bags, as a candidate, for three years, and preaching my double sermon on this text—*Remember Lot's wife*, in all the vacant parishes north and south of the *Blue Hills*, with more diligence than success, I began to conclude that the world was eccentric, as well as I; to please them, would be difficult; and to please them and profit them both, would be impossible; so I gave up divinity for the science of drugs and medicines; in short, I became a physician.

Here, too, my ill-stars followed me; and I was stopped in this career, by my conscience. For the old Esculapian with whom I studied, having charged me to be sure to kill the disease, whether the patient recovered or not, I soon found it was much easier to kill both, than to do justice to either. I began to be afraid to ride by night, (for I had not shaken off all belief in ghosts,) and I certainly know no person more proper to be haunted by all the spirits in a church-yard, than a physician. This fear, together with my conscience, made me hesitate when I came into a sick chamber; and I was so long in determining what was the disease and what the remedy, that my patients lost all confidence in me. In short, I

was an honest man, told the truth, confessed my ignorance, and got out of business; so that I was once more reduced to shrink behind a counter in a grocery store, set up in my native town, with certain red casks standing on one end, with the inscriptions —*Wine*, *New England Rum*, *Brandy*, &c.

For my honor's sake, I must say, I abandoned this business long before the temperance reformation; but not until my neighbors began to crack some very severe jokes at my expense. Some began to conjecture that I never should be good for any thing. One told me the story of a man, who kept an owl in hopes he would at last prove a singing bird, because he kept such a long, solemn thinking beforehand. One wag declared, in reference to my several professions of preacher, doctor, and rum-seller, that I first tried to save the soul, then the body, and, failing in these, I at last tried to destroy soul and body both. Thus have sorrows and disappointments been rained on my defenceless, unfortunate head.

I am now settled, in a small, one-story house, which stands behind six apple-trees, in Bundleborough, my native town. I have a wife and six small children, who are, to confess the truth, in a most *poetic* condition, and certainly in no danger of losing their morals by feeding on the fat of the land. I cultivate a little farm, which I manage by books, and by reading Mr. Fessenden's paper, as anybody might see by looking at the fields and fences; and being told by

my neighbors, that I am fit for nothing else, I have resolved to turn author. My wife sometimes weeps, when she sees me leaning over my desk, rather than over the plough, and tells me the state of our pork-tub. But, I assure her, I am resolved to write on; and that a generous public, either out of admiration or pity, and perhaps a mixture of both, will never suffer my speculations to be neglected, or my family to perish.

> My poor, pale wife, my ragged children, see!
> If you have pity in you, pity me.

THE PURITAN.

No. 19.

—Gewgaws fetched from Aaron's old wardrobe, or the flamen's vestry.
Milton.

In a republic, it should be the aim of every man to be a good citizen; and in this character, is included a knowledge of his duty, and a disposition to perform it. Respecting the disposition, I have little to say on the present occasion. Only I would remark, that a disposition to our duty, is the best incentive to those painful studies by which its theory is sometimes to be known. A citizen of our republic, can hardly understand his offices without a retrospect of past times. As in looking at a tree, its whole constitution cannot be understood without delving to its roots, so our present condition is the result of causes which operated long before we were born. Would we judge of the beauty of the tree of liberty, or know where to place ourselves under its blessed

shade, we must go back and see the period in which its seed was planted, and mark how its trunk and branches grew.

In the beginning of the 16th century, Europe was overshadowed by thick darkness; and the power of the Roman pontiff seemed consolidated into a prescriptive right. "All the complaints," says father Paul, "against the grandeur of the Roman court, seemed to have ceased, and the western Christians were living in obedience to its laws. There was a small sect in the south of France, detested by all their neighbors, who dissented from the established church. But they were a simple and ignorant people, and not likely to spread their opinions. John Huss, too, had left some followers in Germany; but they were regarded as a defeated and broken sect. The difficulties between the popes and secular princes respecting investitures, had been composed." All Europe agreed in bowing with reverence before the papal throne. Whatever antiquity had established, and time handed down, was received with submission. The Bible was unknown; Aristotle reigned in the schools; princes held their thrones, and priests their authority, by the same divine right; a right, which it was considered impiety to question. In politics, in religion, in philosophy, it seemed to be the business of the human mind, not to reason, but to receive implicitly whatever was offered to it. There was a wonderful unity in public opinion, but it was a unity caused by darkness, and secured by chains.

But when the principle was once admitted, that it was not a sufficient proof that an opinion was *right* because it was established, you can easily see that a door was opened for a diversity of views. Prescription was a settled law, not very difficult to ascertain; and, when once known, no more was to be thought of than to obey it. It was a highway in which the dullest as well as the brightest intellect might walk with ease. But as soon as this common road was left, and men strayed into the open field, it became a matter of judgment how far it was wise to deviate. A new guide was set up—investigation. Hence there arose sects in philosophy, and parties in politics and religion.

The three great subjects before the human mind, are religion, politics, and philosophy; and with respect to each of them in their chief questions, there seems to be two sides to be taken which are consistent; and there is no middle ground. Thus in politics, you may make the public welfare, or the rights of man, your chief object; or you may go back to charters, and laws, and positive enactments; and consider whatever is established as binding. It seems to me that most of the British writers, who attempt a medium, are very imperfect in their statement of facts, and very partial in their deduction of consequences. Burke is an example. He speaks with great abhorrence of French principles, and especially of their grand principle, the *rights of man.* "They

despise," says he, "experience, as the wisdom of unlettered men; and as for the rest, they have wrought, under ground, a mine that will blow up, at one grand explosion, all examples of antiquity; all precedents, charters, and acts of parliament. They have the rights of men. Against these there is no prescription; against these, no argument is binding; any thing withheld from their full demand, is so much fraud and injustice." But, I ask, how was it possible to justify a single step in favor of liberty, without blowing up these barbarous examples of antiquity? The moment you admit the *established*, as a proof of the *just* and the *true*, the cause of liberty is lost, and the tyrant will reduce you to silence, however strongly you may be entrenched behind the mound of reason. On this principle, in every question between king Charles and his parliament, the king was right, and the people were wrong. Even the extravagant doctrine of Sibthorp and Manwaring, (those servile clergymen,) that all property belonged to the king; that parliaments were not necessary for taxes; that he might take what he pleased even to beggaring the subject, and that it was treason to resist him; all this can be maintained. For nothing is better known, than on feudal principles, all property was considered as the king's; he dealt it out to his subjects, and they paid an acknowledgment in wardships, scutages, &c. So that the most absolute tyranny had a hoary antiquity on its side, and could plead a long prescription to

ratify its severest laws. I recollect that Blackstone, after acknowledging that an acquaintance with feudal institutions is necessary to the understanding of the common law of England, undertakes to trace their liberties to established customs from Saxon times; but in my opinion, with very little success. I was struck with his inconsistency in almost every page. There never was a more inconsistent being, than an English politician, denying the right of the people to elect their chief magistrate, and yet defending the title of William, prince of Orange, to the throne. King James it is said *abdicated;* that is, the people drove him away because they would not bear his tyranny any longer. He *abdicated* almost with a bayonet at his breast. The very word is replete with deception; and there is no other mode of getting rid of these entangling consequences, than to appeal boldly to first principles, and to say at once, the welfare of the people is the supreme law:—and what is the welfare of the people, but a better name for the *rights of man?*

So in religion, there are two consistent sides to be taken. You must either say that the Bible is a sufficient guide; and that each man has a right to interpret it, subject to no control but his own conscience; or you must admit all the terrible consequences that the man of Rome will draw from authority. It is vain to distinguish here, between essentials and non-essentials, since who has the privilege of saying what

these non-essentials are? If the magistrate may regulate the non-essentials, and claim the further prerogative of deciding what these non-essentials are, he can bring every article of religion within the scope of his authority. He has only to call whatever subject he pleases a non-essential, and it immediately falls within his province. In a word, he is a pope with a secular name. The first protestants broke away from the church of Rome with the Bible in their hands to justify their secession, and still better protestants broke away from them, and retorted on them with greater consistency, their own principles. The stream became clear as it receded from the fountain; and the gospel never recovered its first purity, until the rights of conscience were fully understood.

I have hardly time to illustrate the two sides in philosophy; they seem to be the authority of Aristotle, and the evidence of experiments. The same spirit prevailed in all the departments of knowledge, and was to be resisted on the same principles.

No class of people ever *came nearer* to consistency in the views they adopted concerning the religious part of these questions, than the ancient Puritans. Let us consider the rise of this sect, their character, and their principles. We have a personal interest in this investigation; for we cannot understand our own history, without looking back to the party from which our institutions arose.

When we hear of the wisest and most learned men

of a nation, arranged into parties, and disputing about a vestment, a square cap, a rochet, a mitre, we can hardly refrain from a smile; it seems ridiculous. But when we think a little further, we find that all human subjects derive their importance, not from their nature considered in singleness, but from their connections. As in war, the battle is often fought on a narrow plat of ground, which is to decide the fate of kingdoms between whole circles of longitude, so in moral affairs the question may be narrow in its nature, but wide in its bearing. It is but reasonable to presume, that when an apparent trifle excites the strongest passions of men *for a long time*, it is connected with permanent interests; it is the signal and the seal of some important instrument. We assume to ourselves an unproved superiority, if we imagine ourselves so much wiser than those ancient leaders, as to be entitled to ridicule their controversies; at least before we understand them as well as they did themselves. It is very rare in the conflict of human passions, that the outward and visible sign is all. One party does not venture to bring forward their utmost claims; and the other party is willing to oppose the question as if it were a superficial one. In the mean time, *they* understand each other exactly. The policy on both sides, concurs in one point of deception. The object of a mask is not always concealment; it is sometimes worn to embarrass an enemy. In such cases, it is not the straw that floats on the surface; it

is the stream which sweeps the bottom, that arrests the public attention. We have all seen this, in our own land; we should remember that the passions of men when packed into parties, are in all ages essentially the same.

The reformation in England was begun wholly on the principles of worldly policy. Henry VIII. being tired of his old wife, Catharine, and falling in love with Anna Bullen, applied to the pope for a divorce; and though the request was not refused, it was delayed so long, that this irritable monarch became impatient, and took the reigns of ecclesiastical authority into his own hand. The question then was, how he should make his people go along with him. For though the people of England had not been educated in the deepest reverence to the man of Rome, (for they were always restive children,) still, to call upon a whole nation to put off their religious opinions and habits at once, as a man would put off his coat, was too large a demand even for that servile age. Fortunately for the king, a vast treasure had been accumulating in the beneficed houses for ages. Such is the doctrine of the church of Rome, that a wealthy sinner on his death-bed, may commute for the sins of his life, by founding an abbey; and all such gifts are held in mortmain; that is, there is no alienation. In this way, the wealth of the church was a treasure always increasing; and it is computed by Giannone, the historian of Naples, (per Voltaire's quo-

tation,) that two thirds of the whole wealth of the kingdom had passed over to the church. Voltaire computes the income of all the clergy in France, at 800,000,000 of livres; and says this sum is not large compared with other Catholic countries. In Scotland, before the reformation, full half of the property of that country was held by the clergy; and though in England, when Henry suppressed the greater monasteries, their income was computed at only about £161,100—while the income of all the realm was 3,000,000, and this is said to be small by Hume—yet we should remember that the lesser monasteries had already been suppressed, and that a long list of other exactions is to be added to this sum; and finally, small as it is called, it amounted to $\frac{1}{20}$ of the property of the whole kingdom. This vast treasure then the king seized on, and held it up to his nobles as a lure, to lead them to follow his steps. He told them if they would revolt from Rome, he should need no more taxes; and thus, between love and money; between the complex power of Anna Bullen's eyes, and the confiscations of the church, the people of England became a sort of protestants. It has been astonishing in all ages, how men open their eyes to the light of religion, when its blessings descend into the purse.

In this state of things, it will be seen by the penetrating eye of him who looks beyond surfaces to

principles, that the protestant reformation in England was accomplished with very little change either in the morals or the hearts of the body of the people. They merely removed the supremacy in the church, from the pope to the king; and abridged a few ceremonies, of which the relects were reserved as a rear bridge to retreat over to the dominion of Rome.

Whether we take the reformation at the time of Henry VIII., Edward VI., or queen Elizabeth, we shall find in all these periods, there was no small danger of a popish successor. In the latter part of Henry's day, it is true, Edward was the next heir; but Mary likewise was living a bigoted papist, and backed by a great interest, and watching to seize the throne. In Edward's reign, during his minority, and especially when his health began to fail, her interest must have been powerfully felt. When Elizabeth mounted the throne, there was another Mary, and a papist, whose beauty made her formidable, waiting for the succession, and almost claiming it without waiting. Now, in such a condition, the shaking of a leaf might justly create an alarm even to a wise and brave man. Our fathers looked through the ceremonies to consequences, to deeper principles. Power and oppression claimed their usurped rights in trifles; and by trifles must liberty and wisdom defend those rights, founded in nature, and which the gospel allowed.

In a word, to represent the leading Puritans as

ridiculous precisians, for refusing the ceremonies, would be about as wise as to call the Roman emperors fools and madmen, because they always endeavor to punish some popular leader in the provinces, for putting on a purple cloak.

THE PURITAN.

No. 20.

To conclude from all, what is man but a *micro-coat*, or rather a complete suit of clothes, with all its trimmings?

Swift.

In all ages of the world, there have been certain affinities, in human opinions and practices, which deserve to be noticed. It is certain that liberty has been dressed in the simplest garb, while monarchy and priesthood have always arrayed themselves in a round of ceremonies. In China, morality and religion themselves, those ethereal essences, born in the skies, and whose domain is the heart, have degenerated into bowings, prostrations and genuflections, and all those outward motions by which policy conceals her barrenness when she expels principle from moral life. In Rome, too, where a most degenerate form of Christianity is nevertheless better than paganism, we find, that prayer is muttered over in an unknown tongue; and the splendor of the pontiff and his car-

dinals, supplies the place of the beauties of holiness. In the English church, there is more virtue and less ceremony; the dress is plainer, and there is more demand on individual thought. In politics, also, the more liberty the more simplicity. A president or governor, is quite an unfeathered bird compared with a lord or a king. Our own country has manifestly grown more simple, as she has become more republican. I have often heard my grandfather describe our courts of law, when we were a province of Great Britain. The judges wore their wigs and their gowns; the lawyers pled in surplices and bands; and the sheriff's red coat was decorated with gold lace. Liberty, like truth, seems to delight in her own nakedness, and supposes her beauties will be most admired when they are most liberally exposed and seen.

In private life, we see the same falling of the leaves from the tree of custom with the increase of autumnal fruit. I myself remember, when the ranks of society (for even republicanism has its ranks) were discriminated far more by the colors and forms of dress than are now prevalent. Every gentleman was arrayed in his lined coat, his small-clothes and wig; he covered his powdered hair by a three-cornered hat; and his bosom was open, displaying his well-plaited linen, and ruffles, like the blossoms of a pea-vine bursting from a pod. Every physician must wear a red coat, as now every preacher wears a black one. As to the ladies, there was no end to their

decorations. The lines between those who might wear their flounces and furbelows, their changeable silk gowns and damask-wrought petticoats, and those who might not, was drawn with most aristocratic precision. The fashions of the court of St. James, were reflected to our distant provinces, diminished, to be sure, as the sun sheds a fainter light while he is yet lingering behind the orient waves. All these patchwork colors of society are now fading. We have all literally become *sans culottes;* even the black coat is falling from the preacher's back; and some of our youthful clergy are so heretically given, that they will wear white hats. We shall soon sink into indiscriminate woollen, like a flock of sheep.

The reason of this change it is not difficult to see. In proportion as men are not intrusted with their own opinions and destinies, their minds sink to trifles; they must be amused with court ceremonies or religious rites; they must wear a ribbon, or a crosier; and the church which presents no doctrines or discussions, must be filled with incense, and resound to the mellow pipes of the organ. No man ever loved church ceremonies, who has grappled with the mysteries of predestination. No man will think it his chief glory to dance at court, who can figure in a speech in the house of commons. The objects of attention pass from the eye to the mind; rochets pass to abstraction, crowns are exchanged for solid influence and persuasive power. It was said of old Samuel Adams, the

hero of '76, that he would not have been a king for the world. But he would have liked to have Boston govern the union, and his own wisdom and eloquence govern Boston. The story is credible, for it is the very spirit of republicanism. The most grateful laurel to intellectual ambition, is to rule indeed, but to rule by mental power.

It should be added, that this republican hero, whose desire has now been quoted, was very plain in his dress, manners, equipage and household regulations.

But the gain and the loss!—this is the question, which has sometimes been debated. Will the mass of society ever become such thinking beings as to be ruled by truth, presented in all the nakedness of her logical abstraction to the mind. I remember the time when a clergyman's wig presented an awe to the parishioner, which no language can express; no reason increase; and who does not remember the power of sheriff Henderson and Allen's laced hats and terrific swords? Is it possible to reverence the opinion of the judge, who borrows nothing from the tailor; and, if the soldier's uniform is still allowed to be influential in war, must not the square cap, the band and surplice, have some power in religion? Nature herself surrounds her most precious fruit with green leaves, and forecasts it by the May-born blossoms.

It is true, there is great power in dress. It is true also, there is such a thing as flying from idle ornaments, to meanness, to indecency, to a nakedness

which no charity can love and all wisdom must despise. There is a state of society and grade of intelligence, where ceremonies and *the wardrobe of the flamen's vestry* are useful. But it should be remembered, that if these substitutes are sometimes profitable for people who will not think, they sometimes keep people from thinking. They suit a peculiar grade of intelligence, but serve to confine the mind to that grade. And as a bird often drives her young from the bough in order to compel them to fly, so it is wise sometimes in patriots and reformers to tear away these buttresses of indolence and superstition, and compel the public mind to soar into the boundless regions of purity and light. In this they copy God, who wisely established, and as wisely repealed, the picturing rites of his chosen nation.

Whether our own country may not have gone too far in this denudating process, is a curious question. I have been told, it was once proposed in the New York legislature, very seriously, by some conscientious republican, to drop the flattering names of "Mr. Speaker," and "the honorable gentleman," &c. and substitute plain Christian or surnames, as more suitable to the humility of a republican senate; when one member arose and made a ludicrous speech, in which he carried out the new principle to its highest extreme. "That chap, who sits behind your chair, friend speaker, proposes so and so. Neighbor longshanks, who sits the other side of the house, thinks so

and so. Honest Roger, who occupies this seat near me," &c. &c. It is almost needless to say, that the gravest muscles were relaxed at the ridicule of the thing; and the proposition was dismissed with scorn and contempt.

Decency, certainly, in all governments is important to procure respect; and perhaps the wisest philosopher, and the most sagacious statesman, is obliged to confess, that he owes something in his reception to his manner and even dress. Solomon was arrayed in glory; and Plato wore robes, which moved the spleen of such a cynic as Diogenes. Even the Saviour of men, if it be not irreverent to quote his name in this connection, left a seamless robe, which the soldiers deemed too precious to be torn. That republicanism may have become too naked, is possible; but I can hardly lament the loss of nearly eight yards of broadcloth in a pair of aristocratic breeches, if the saved expense may be appropriated to the diffusion of good principles, good schoolmasters, and good clergymen.

THE PURITAN.

No. 21.

Always acting as if in the presence of canonized forefathers, the spirit of freedom, leading in itself to misrule and excess, is tempered with an awful gravity.

Burke.

Somewhere in the writings of Montesquieu, it is laid down as a fundamental law of historical probability, that the representations of a triumphant party should always be distrusted, respecting the party over whom their victories are won. They have the strongest temptation to misrepresent the motives of their opponents, mutilate the facts, and give the most favorable coloring to their own side. Unluckily, the greatest part of history comes from the writers, encouraged or rewarded by a triumphant faction; and this is the circumstance which throws the greatest uncertainty on its truth or probability. Rome expelled her kings, and established a republic under the auspices of the first Brutus. Now it can scarcely be doubted, that

these warm republicans blackened the character of the Tarquins with every crime, which their inflamed passions could suggest to their fertile imaginations; and I have often thought the story of Tulla, driving his affrighted horses, *consternatos equos*, over the bloody corpse of her father, sounds much more like a republican fiction, to make tyrants hateful, than real truth. A very similar story is told of Buonaparte, driving his chariot over dying soldiers; an action which, if allowed by his humanity, would have been by his policy forbidden.

But this is precisely the suspected channel, through which the story of the Puritans has come to us. We receive still the laws of literature from the court of England; and the Puritans sunk under the ascendance of an exasperated party, on the restoration of Charles II. Every art was used to distort their principles, misrepresent their characters, and bring their whole proceedings into derision and contempt. Not only the historians told the story, with partial feelings and suppressing half the truth; but poets and moral writers united their genius, and blended their colorings, to roll down the false impression to a prejudiced posterity. Truth has seldom walked naked among mankind; not because she blushes at her own deformity, but because some faction or interest is afraid or ashamed to see her.

For more than a century and an half, the party which could hope to reign only by suppressing the

Puritan spirit, has held the throne of England; and in the management of the vast treasures of the nation, has been able to call around it all the prostituted geniuses, whose venal pens were ready to uphold the cause from which they derived their daily bread. Even in minds where better principles prevailed, strong prejudices have been seated; and they have been taught to look back on the Puritans as a routed faction, whose swords might be dangerous, but whose arguments were ridiculous. But what is worse, this perverted literature has been encouraged in this country, where its misrepresentations are certainly the most pernicious. Lured by the charms of wit, and willing to laugh, though at our own expense, we have suffered our memories to be crammed with falsehoods, and our feelings to become a medley of republican purposes, and monarchical prejudices; our reason and our fancy have been embattled against each other; and we have come very near to the *double-minded man, who is unstable in all his ways.* The Tory pages of Hume, I suspect, are more familiar to our countrymen, than the History of Mrs. Macaulay, though written with spirit and elegance; and in our imagination, at least, British literature has achieved a victory, which our ancestors and ourselves would have scorned to yield to the most valiant efforts of the British arms.

One of the first writers after the restoration, was the author of Hudibras, whose professed object it

was, to flatter his king by degrading the Puritans. His genius has been compared to that of Cervantes; and the satire of the Spanish author, has been supposed to have pointed the lash of the English poet. But there is an important difference. What makes Don Quixote superior to all other satires is, the wonderful DISCRIMINATION with which all that was good in the absurdities of chivalry is spared, and yet its follies made supremely ridiculous, without the least exaggeration. Cervantes pulled up the weed, and spared the adjacent flower. But Butler slashes with promiscuous vengeance through the whole garden; all is distorted, and nothing is spared. The poor Puritans are pounded as with a flail; and his satire wants, if not resemblance, at least moderation and truth. Butler always disposes his light, so that the object shall cast a deformed and gigantic shadow before the reader is incited to laugh. Hear how he anatomizes the Puritans.

A sect whose chief devotion lies
In odd perverse antipathies;
In falling out with that or this,
And finding somewhat still amiss;
More peevish, cross and splenetic,
Than dog distract and monkey sick;
That with more care keep holiday
The wrong than others the right way;
Compound for sins they are inclined to,
By damning those they have no mind to—&c.

See Hudibras, Canto I.

Their *antipathies*, however *odd* and *perverse*, were chiefly against such things as Laud, the Star Chamber, the Court of High Commission, cropping men's ears, and standing in the pillory for religious opinions; objects, which if a single being can now advocate, I must leave him to his taste. Cowley thus characterizes the Puritans:

> I would not be a Puritan, though he
> Can preach two hours, and yet his sermon be
> But half a quarter long;
> Though from his old mechanic trade,
> By vision he's a pastor made,
> His faith was grown so strong;
> Nay, though he think to gain salvation,
> By calling the Pope the whore of Babylon.
>
> *Cowley's Miscellany.*

This perpetual reproach of preaching without learning, must be answered by the writings of Owen and Baxter; and by the schools and colleges they were in haste to establish in New England; and I question whether any Puritan ever wrote any verses more doggerel, than the two last in the above-quoted stanza—

> Nay, though he think to gain salva-ti-on,
> By calling the Pope the whore of Bab-y-lon.

How beautiful! how melodious and charming! If the reader cannot laugh *with* such a poet, he can certainly laugh *at* him.

Shakspeare is a little more just to the Puritans; in fact, it may be questioned whether he had not a secret hankering after them. In the Twelfth Night, Act II. Scene 3, when Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and Maria, are discoursing of the character of the conceited Malvolio, the dialogue thus proceeds—

Sir Toby. Possess us, possess us, tell us something of him.

Maria. Marry, Sir, sometimes he is a kind of Puritan.

Sir Andrew. Oh, if I thought that, I'd beat him like a dog.

Sir Toby. What, for being a Puritan? Thy exquisite reason, dear knight?

Sir Andrew. I have no exquisite reason for't, but I have reason good enough.

Maria. The devil a Puritan that he is, or any thing constantly but a time-pleaser.

What is this, but slily saying that the Puritans were often beaten without reason; and were no time-servers. The sentiment of beating the Puritans, comes from a character whom Shakspeare has made a blockhead; and I am not sure, that it is not a sly hit upon some of the persecuting priests, or drunken justices, of that age. In the Merry Wives of Windsor, too, we have the character of Sir Hugh, an Episcopal clergyman, who drinks sack, haunts taverns, and fights duels. Now when we remember that Shakspeare never takes his characters but from

known resemblances, we must suppose there were many such preachers in the English church; and the Puritans were justified in their separation from it. The testimony of such writers is better, perhaps, than the records of formal history—it is impartial.

In reading past history—and in no portion of history more than that which pertains to the period which generated the principles of our fathers—the reader is perplexed by the different and even opposite representations, which the clashing factions give to their cause; and he is inclined to ask, with Pilate, *What is truth?* My direction would be, look through the loopholes; catch up the accidental rays, which peep through the crevices and chasms, where sincerity is not stifled by art. Every accidental pamphlet, every sermon and poem of a cotemporary writer, may be considered as throwing light on that fermenting age, when the tree of liberty was (we may almost say) planted; and, certainly, began to take the deepest root, and cast the broadest shade. It was an era of great efforts, great sufferings, and great minds. Then were formed the Hampdens and Pyms of Old England, and the Carvers and Winthrops of the New; and it seems essential to the character we are to act, and the station that we are to fill, that we should rightly estimate them; at least, to place them too low in our hearts, would be contrary to the policy of all nations, and the practice of all ages. To reach the truth, then, let every youthful student in history con-

sider the eternal law of historical probability, which Montesquieu has laid down; let him reflect, we receive our first impressions from English literature; we hear the tale from an exasperated faction, once defeated, but finally victorious. Let him dig the statues of his fathers from the mud, in which they have been buried; wash them; set them on their proper pedestal; view them, and review them, in the light of the sun; and survey their serious, but beautiful features, until he catches whatever is firing in their burning spirits, and copies whatever is great, in their great example.

THE PURITAN.

No. 22.

Far other dreams my erring soul employ;
Far other raptures of unholy joy.

Eloisa to Abelard.

I HAVE already told my patient reader, who has seen fit to accompany me thus far, that I was for a time a resident in the city of Boston. No man leaves the smoke of his paternal chimney without enlarging his ideas, for good or for evil. I was invited to attend the theatre, that abomination of the Puritans; and I must confess there was a long contest between my curiosity and my conscience. My only conception of a play was from an old mutilated copy of Addison's *Cato*, which might serve for an emblem of eternity, as it had neither beginning nor ending to it; and a pamphlet with pasteboard covers, containing Sir Richard Steel's *Conscious Lovers*, both of them I found in my grandfather's garret, and left by some Boston family that had occupied a part of his house,

during three months in the summer. These comprised the sum of my dramatic knowledge; and I recollect, that my conscience smote me once bitterly for reading Cato on a Saturday night, after the sun had set, as I was taught to believe that at this hour, the Sabbath had already commenced.

But in Boston, one gets a new conscience; and I, who had groaned over my profane reading, was now actually induced to go and see a play. I had heard a great deal said, about the drama's being a representation of nature; that players were the *abstract and brief chroniclers of the times;* that they *held the mirror up to nature;* and that a good tragedy, well acted, was as much a moral lecture as one of Blair's sermons. I hesitated for some time; but Tom Wildbull at last telling me, that he believed that Shakspeare was as much inspired as ever Solomon was, and a far wiser man, I concluded to put my conscience into my pocket, and go to this new school of wisdom; especially as grandpa' and aunt Hannah would never be likely to know it.

It was in the winter of 1802-3. Barrett was then manager of the Federal street theatre, and chief tragedian. The Haymarket house was then deserted, standing as an enormous wooden pile, and dreaded as the nest-egg of some future conflagration. The victory of the *amateurs* of the drama over the puritanical scruples of the town of Boston, had then just been won, and, such was the rapid increase of histrionic

taste, that the population at that time, a little over twenty thousand, supported two theatres for two seasons. But the fever had began to abate; and I went to old Federal street, to see what none of the Oldbug generation had ever seen before.

The play was the *Rival Queens*, or *Alexander the Great*. But, O who can describe the gay expansion of feeling, which rushes on the mind, when a rustic eye first salutes the splendors of the inside of a playhouse? The music, the orchestra, the candles, the stage, the boxes crowded with ladies; all presented a bright assemblage of illusions, such as I had never seen or imagined before. The curtain, I recollect, had risen before I entered; and Hephestron and Lysimachus were tilting at each other's breasts with their drawn swords. It made my heart palpitate; I almost thought them in earnest; but I was soon cured of that illusion, for I found that, if a play was an imitation of nature, it was such nature as I had never seen. It all seemed to me like a delightful mass of extravagance; and their sentiments were no more like any thing in New England, than their scenery was like the maple grove before Oldbug house in Bundleborough. How differently did Alexander talk to Statira, from what Robert Crane did to my aunt Hannah, when I lay concealed behind the settle! Even if she had *swallowed a dictionary*, (as her lover accused her,) I doubt whether she would have under-

stood the following language, though it had been spoken by Sir Charles Grandison himself.

> Statira!
> O I could sound that charming, cruel name
> 'Till the tired echo faint with repetition;
> 'Till all the breathless groves and quiet myrtles
> Shook with my sighs, as if a tempest bowed them.

Or his equally moderate speech to his other paramour, Roxana.

> Take, take the conquered world, dispose of crowns
> And canton out the empires of the globe!
> But leave me, madam, with repentant tears,
> And undissembled sorrows, to atone
> The wrongs, I have offered to this injured excellence.

Then when this piece of *excellence* dies, stabbed by her jealous rival, the speech of Alexander is a true sample of stage sorrow; but it would hardly pass at a New England funeral.

> Is there not cause to put the world in mourning?
> Burn all the spires that seem to meet the sky;
> Beat down the battlements of every city;
> And, for the monument of this loved creature,
> Root up the bowers and pave 'em all with gold;
> Drain dry the Ganges, make the Indies poor
> To deck her tomb; no shrine nor altar spare,
> But strip the pomp from gods, to place it there.

No wonder that poets are generally pagans; for what horrid blasphemy must it be to treat the true God with the liberty and presumption, with which they deal with their tolerant deities! Most of the prayers, which I have heard on the stage, (and there is a great deal of praying there,) were offered to Jupiter, or his spotless associates; and truly, if such liberties must be taken with Heaven, it is well there are divinities worthy of the worshippers and the worship.

It has been hotly contested what religion Shakspeare was of; and some of his note-mongers have maintained the theory that he was a Catholic; and many scraps have been selected from his plays to support that imagination. It is not unlikely that coming from the west of England, in the age of Elizabeth, the legends of the old religion might be lingering around his mind. But the truth is, all play writers and novel writers are of one religion, and teach one system of morality. They are as much alike as the several leaves on a chestnut-tree. In the first place, they believe in fifty or five hundred gods, as the occasion requires; they will allude to a story in Ovid, or a miracle in the gospel, with equal confidence and credit; they have faith enough in the immortality of the soul, to dress out a decent ghost; it is the duty of a hero, or a lover, to pray, when he wants to make a fine speech, and his devotion runs well in blank verse; and lastly, there is a heaven where all disappointed sweethearts are sure to meet, who end their

own lives by dagger or poison, and die kissing each other. These, I hold, to be prime articles in the creed of all tragic poets, since the hour when passion first strutted in buskins; and it is the only system to which they yield their unfeigned assent.

I confess, I was scandalized at the departures from nature, which I saw this evening, notwithstanding the novelty of the music and scenery of a first night spent in a theatre. When the tempestuous Roxana came in, with a drawn dagger in her hand, and cried out—

> Shut the brazen gates,
> And make them fast with all their massy bars,

I was astonished that mortals should live in such palaces; and could not but contrast their condition, with the inmates of my grandfather's house. No brazen gates there; no massy bars; but a red, wooden door, with two ripe cucumbers over it, going to seed; and fastened by a peg over the latch, and half the nights not fastened at all. Before Alexander came in, I expected to see a little man, with one *shoulder too high*, and with a couple of epaulets on his shoulders. But when Barrett appeared, a great, fat, British actor, puffing and blowing; and finally leaping from his throne, and dying more like a dying bull than a dying man, I was pretty sure whatever else the theatre might be, it was not the *mirror held up to nature*. In short, I saw but two things, which were natural;—

the elephants, which accompanied Alexander's triumphant entrance into Babylon, looked pretty well at a distance, especially as I sat half way back in the pit; and when Clytus appeared drinking at the banquet, he appeared to me, *drunk to perfection.*

As I went home, I could not but ask myself, if my grandfather and aunt Hannah should find out where I had been, (which I prayed Heaven they might not,) what moral lesson I should say I had learned, as an excuse for trespassing on such unsanctified ground. What moral lesson!! why, in the first place, if you buy forty yards of gray gauze, and stuff two stout men into it, one for the fore legs and one for the hind, it will make a pretty good elephant, to be seen by candlelight. And secondly, though a theatre may be an excellent place for a court lady, a bishop, or a fiddler, it is no place for a Puritan, whose aunt has made him thanksgiving *turn-overs*, and whose grandfather is a deacon.

THE PURITAN.

No. 23.

Her eyes swollen with flowing streams aflote,
  Wherewith her lookes throwen up full piteous lie,
Her forceless hands together ofte she smote,
  With doleful strikes, that echoed in the skye:
Whose playnt such sighs dyd strayt accompany,
That in my doom was never man did see
A wight but halfe so wo begone as she.

Sackville.

The severity of manners with which the Puritans regulated their lives, and the peculiar frown with which they looked upon theatres, interludes, dances, fairs, and other popular amusements, have been considered by some as great blemishes in their characters, as proofs of the want of wisdom in establishing a commonwealth, or want of tenderness for the frailties of youth and the general follies of mankind. It has been said that man, especially in the earlier stages of life, needs amusement; that recreation prepares the mind for labor; and that as the stream,

which leaps over the precipice, and sparkles as it falls, only flows purer in the level bed below, for its aerial sport, so the mind, brought up in a free system of manners, is more open, more generous, returns from every relaxation with new vigor to virtue, and is better prepared to fulfil the duties, which, in their appropriate season, it owes either to man or to God.

But, it seems to me, that such objectors have hardly penetrated into the deep design which our fathers had in view. They were anxious to revive and restore the spirit of ancient freedom, purified from its corruptible body—licentiousness; and animated by its supporting soul—religion. This great conception, though not in all its consistent consequences, seems to have entered into some of the wisest heads, which adorned the age of Elizabeth. Now everybody knows that when we once set these waters a flowing, they are apt to flow too fast. Government is either a settled despotism; a stagnant pool, infecting the air, and propagating pestilence and death; or the people become a foaming torrent, broken from all restraint and involving all the fences of security and order in ruins. Then where is the medium? How shall you break up the surface of the putrid sea, and set the waves rolling, and yet say to them, with an almost supernatural energy, *hitherto shall ye come and no further?* It must be done by combining, with the most unshackled theories of liberty, the severest system of manners. As you take off the grosser chains from the political

constitution, you must bind others of a more refined construction around the heart.

All republicans have been serious; courtiers are proverbially light and gay. Cato was a Stoic, and Cæsar an Epicurean; and both of them in perfect consistency with their political objects. When Shakspeare, in conformity to the authority of Plutarch, makes Cæsar say, as he passes by Cassius,

> Let me have men about me that are fat,
> Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights;
> Yond' Cassius has a lean and hungry look,
> He thinks too much; such men are dangerous.

And a little further on—

> He loves no plays,
> As thou doest, Antony; he hears no music;
> Seldom he smiles; and smiles in such a sort
> As if he mocked himself, and scorned his spirit
> That could be moved to smile at any thing.

He speaks the very voice of nature. All tyrants have felt so. Cyrus, when he sent his bawds and panders to corrupt the Lydians; king James, when he published his book of Sabbath sports; Louis XIV., when he surrounded himself with the polished corruptions of the French court — a system of manners which have rendered Paris incapable of freedom to this day; Charles II., when he filled London with revelry and lust;—all had an instinctive

perception of the interests of power, reigning through oppression. They wished to have no Puritans; no thinkers; *no lean and hungry looks;* no popular virtues, which might build up liberty on the ruin of their thrones. On the other hand, let liberty be established on the most plausible theories, and secured by the most satisfactory parchments; multiply your checks, your vetos, your censors, your tribunes, your juries, your elections, to any extent that contemplative wisdom may delight in; nevertheless, let an enervating system of manners come in, and liberty is no more; the tree withers, the blossoms are blighted, and sooner or later, its most precious and promising fruit falls unripened to the ground. If there is any truth that all history enforces, it is this.

Perhaps it may be thought that this is refining and imputing to the bigoted rage of the sixteenth century, a prospective wisdom, which is solely the result of the experience of consequences in cooler minds since. It is very true, that some speculative minds are apt to refine, when reviewing the transactions of some superstitious ages; and I have no doubt a vast amount of policy has been imputed to the popes, of which, could we have looked into their minds, we should have found no traces. Still I think the plastic notion, the embryo conception of a constitutional and consistent liberty, had sprung up in the minds of the Puritans. It is very true that men always climb up from the *specific* to the *general;* we

tasted honey or sugar before we formed the wide notion of sweetness; the Puritans opposed the rigid requisitions of Parker or Whitgift, before they formed the full idea of the evils of ecclesiastical oppression. But the light was dawning; and more and more consistently do we see the most extensive principles settling on their minds.

There was another thing which made our fathers more and more averse to dissipation of manners or aught that approached it. They were most of them men of moderate fortunes; dwelling in that region of life where profusion is destruction; where industry and economy are not merely appendages to other virtues, but the very soul and secret of success. To such men, and still more to their children, balls and theatres are the very vortices of temporal destruction. To all this we must add, they came to this rough country, bound down by oppression, chased from their homes, to subdue a wilderness; to gather by patient toil a scanty fare; to look into the gloom of a vast forest; to hear the wolf howl on the land, and the long and lazy wave break on the shore; exiled, deserted, solitary, defenceless, surrounded by enemies, and holding their dearest privileges by a precarious tenure; and is it to be imputed to such men that they were too serious?

But more than all, they were Christians; and a man's amusements must be always regulated by his taste, and his taste by the ideal world in which he

dwells. Let my readers beware how they censure a man for his austerity; for it is very possible, if the views which now occupy his mind, could burst on yours, the same effects would follow, and you would be as severe as he. And, after all, no man was ever austere by choice, who did not take pleasure in his austerity. If one man finds in his preacher all that another finds in his favorite actor; if his Bible is his play-book; the death of Christ the most interesting catastrophe; if prayer is his recreation, and his closet his ball-room; if musing is his delight and religion his glory; what right have they to reproach him or call him miserable, whose barren hearts drive them to barren pleasures; who are compelled to wander in imaginary gardens, dressed by fiction, because they find nothing but a leafless desert in real life?

I am aware that our fathers, in some respects, pushed their austerity to an extreme. I am not holding them up as faultless characters, or attempting to justify all their measures. When they wished to regulate a whole community by coercive measures, on a plan suited only to the most devoted Christians, they certainly made a fundamental mistake; for manners are certainly not the province of law. They are essentially free; and no man can be happy or virtuous by a public decree. When king James tried to make the Puritans merry, by compelling them to dance on the Sabbath, he endeavored an absurdity; and when our fathers tried to make the youth of a

whole community as grave as church members, and moreover, by law; it was a similar mistake. Hence we find the reaction; the outbreaking of violent pleasure, the more rude as the more forbidden. I have heard old men tell, amidst the coercive austerity of the day, of wash-tubs set on chimnies; frogs dropped on ashes; cart-wheels taken off; walls built across public roads; and all the freaks of rustic mischief, the *flash and outbreak of a fiery mind* in youth, when age is, or is thought to be, too severe. But, abating this error, I cannot but think that our fathers judged wisely in believing that republicanism, based on religion, must have a system of manners comparatively severe and suited to itself.

Religion is certainly a serious concern. No man ever meditated on its momentous truths without feeling the follies of life to be empty, and finding a new taste generated in his heart. Besides, the pleasures of life give us their whole value by keeping their proper place. You cannot make more of human life than it is. It is like a rose. Leave it to its native effusions on its stalk, and while the season lasts, it will be beautiful and sweet; but when you crush it in your hands to extort its whole essence—it dies.

THE PURITAN.

No. 24.

It is unworthy of a reasonable being, to spend any of the little time allotted us, without some tendency, either direct or oblique, to the end of our existence.

Dr. Johnson.

But were the Puritans a sour and morose generation, who, in pursuit of their political theories and religious abstractions, had extinguished all the spontaneous boundings of the heart? No amusements; no relaxation; none of those free hours, when character throws off its fetters, and friendship is cemented. The reader perhaps has seen, in walking in a pine forest in the month of November, when the sun was verging towards sitting, how his level beams stole through the evergreen foliage, and the time and place, though sombre and severe, gave their darkened brightness a warmer welcome. It is no unapt illustration of Puritan amusements. They are rare;

but they fall not upon exhausted and hackneyed hearts.

Believe me on this point, for I speak from experience. With what delight, in former years, did I set out on a whortleberry expedition; or, as we had it, in colloquial language, going a *huckleberrying!* David, in the first place, brings up old dobbin from the pasture, takes off his fetters, combs down his mane, smooths his fetlocks, sees that his shoes are tight, and *tackles* him into the old waggon, whose capacious body, like the Trojan horse, can hold a host of people. Over this waggon, we weave branches of birch and hemlock, forming a grateful shade, to protect us from the sun of a New England summer, on the last of July or first of August. In this, is placed three or four transverse boards, planed smooth, like the seats in a whale-boat, for the party to sit on. Into this arbor on wheels, we crowd, lads and lasses, young and old, with a good supply of cakes, biscuit and cheese, with little baskets made of birch bark, into which we are to drop our whortleberries, after picking them. After much tumbling, laughing, and crowding, (one lady drops her bonnet, and another her gloves,) the old bay horse puts forth his sinews, and the waggon begins to move—

Over hill, over dale,
Through bush, through brier,
Over park, over pale,
Through flood, through fire,

until we reach the whortleberry pasture, which lies about four miles off. Here begin the labors of the day.

But now the character of the several *pickers* begins to be developed. Some make it a point of conscience, not to put any thing into their baskets, until they have first filled their own maw, of which number, I must confess, I was one. Some love to wander about, to explore new grounds, and, like other mortals, are so intent on distant prospects, as never to collect the treasures around them. Some ladies fancy that they must scream at every toad or reptile they see; and some are so engaged in talking and laughing, that they wholly overlook the business of the day. My aunt Hannah was the best picker I ever knew; and my uncle Gideon incomparably the worst: for he was so intent on taking care of the young ladies, freeing their clothes from briers, and assisting them in skipping from rock to rock, that the expedition was always to him, a day of more gallantry than thrift. I believe, in my conscience, that he never got berries enough to speckle the surface of one pudding.

So roll the hours, the company scattering like a flock of white sheep, and the woods and ravines resounding with the vacant laugh, until the hour of dinner comes. This was always a busy time to my uncle Gideon. First you must select your spot by the side of a rock, or under a great tree, and at a convenient distance from some living spring, or run-

ning stream. You take out a large jack-knife and cut up the shrubbery around you, and stick it, in connected branches, around the spot where you design to spread your table, forming a little arbor, such as Adam might have dressed for Eve in Paradise. Then you take all your boards from the waggon; and piling up stones for legs, you make as good an extemporaneous table as you can; covering it over with all the towels, cravats, and white aprons you can beg or borrow, for a table-cloth; your dishes are slate-stones; and your seats are made of mounds of earth; and here with many a joke and many a laugh, you pile up your cold tongues, your slits of dried beef, your slices of ham, your cake and cheese, and down the party sits with keen appetites, to what our newspapers call a *cold collation.* Your water you bring from an adjacent spring, in your hat, or a wooden bowl, unless a sudden thunder-shower should come up, and then you can open your mouth and catch it directly from the sky.

Here the party sit and talk, as Adam and the angel did in Eden, without fear lest *dinner cool.* The cheeks of the girls are painted with what I consider as the best rouge, good native fresh air, and abundance of exercise, and I have known very important connections formed for life, whose commencement was in a whortleberry pasture. After dinner they scatter again to their afternoon work; and as the sun descends and the time becomes shorter, I

have observed they generally become more sober, and double their diligence, in order to fill their boxes and baskets before evening. Besides, nature becomes a little exhausted, nor can the most lively stream, dance and sparkle through the whole of its course.

I remember, near a great pasture, where our parties used most frequently to go, and which my grandfather called the *Take-up-time*, on the opposite side of the road, on a smooth grassy plain, stood a little cottage, owned by Mr. Johnny Croft, a widower, whose wealth was by no means to be measured by his outward display. Beside this cottage, flowed a river, fringed with alders, which shall be nameless, because in New England, we do not give very poetic names to our rivers; for who can hitch into rhyme, or soften into an essay, the Amonoosuc, the Shetucket, the Quinebaug, and the Quineboag—Mother Brooks, and a hundred other fluvial mother's names, which seem to have been given to fright the muses from our shores, and to invite nothing but factories and paper-mills to the banks of our streams. Well—the said Mr. Johnny Croft, one day, when the sun was declining, came out, and with all the politeness with which he was master, invited a large party of us, to come into his sentry-box to take tea, previous to our returning home.

It is a maxim among the schoolmen, that *whatever is received, is received according to the capacity of the recipient;* and accordingly, my first wonder was

how so small a house was to hold so many people. But as Mr. Croft was a widower, and my aunt Hannah a single lady, we agreed, with many winks and much tittering, to accept his invitation. His little room was soon filled; there was hardly a place to set the table. The seats at the table were soon occupied by the junior visitants; and the only chair left vacant for aunt Hannah, was next to our host, the worthy Mr. John Croft, a little older than herself and a widower. In such a condition, it was impossible to restrain the looks, the winks, and smiles of the company. Mr. Johnny was all attention; and my aunt looked queer several times. Sometimes he would help her to a spoonful of honey, and sometimes to a bunch of grapes; and once he invited her to come and spend a week's visit at his house; for which compliment she returned him her humble and hearty thanks; but left it ambiguous whether she ever intended to come. Mr. Croft was a man, who mingled very little in society; he lived in a solitary part of the town, and in his politeness he was not always able to fulfil his good intentions. The scene would have passed off very well but for accident. My aunt's tea happened to be too strong; and Mr. Croft, who was all attention, jumped up and took the tea-kettle off from the fireplace, in the same room, and began to replenish the cup with water. But whilst in the act, the handle slipped from its socket, the tea-kettle fell, scalded Mr. Croft's foot disastrously, and fell

with its sooty sides on my aunt's chintz gown. Many were the apologies on both sides; and deep the sorrow expressed; and I need not say, that all the wit in the waggon, as we rode home that evening, was at my aunt's expense.

O scenes of simplicity and comparative innocence! How can they regret the chandelier of the midnight dance, who can enjoy our rural moon; or wish for the music or floor of a ball-room, who can hear the melody of our cat-birds as they pursue their simple pleasures on the carpet of nature? Why should those manners be thought despicable, in our fathers, which Goldsmith has commended in verse?

> Spontaneous joys, where nature has its play,
> The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway;
> Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
> Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined.
> But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
> With all the freaks of wanton wealth arrayed,
> In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
> The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;
> And even while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
> The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy?

THE PURITAN.

No. 25.

Many talk of truth, which never sounded the depths from whence it springeth.

Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity.

By the peculiar form in which I have published these papers, I have precluded myself from the adoption of some of those agreeable fictions, with which periodical writers have relieved the reader's weariness, and diversified their speculations; particularly, I can feign no correspondent, who, by remarking on a past paper, can give opportunity of limiting propositions which are too general, or explaining what is obscure. However, I shall adopt somewhat a similar expedient in the following letter, which I hope the reader will be good natured enough to imagine to come from some inquisitive correspondent, who had seen my manuscripts; or, if he is of a more suspicious temperament, he may say, and prove, if he can, that I wrote it to myself.

To the Puritan.

Sir,—I observe in one of your numbers, that you advance the proposition, that the end of every analysis respecting religious duty, must end in reference to the law of God. Obedience to his will, you seem to consider as the best reason which can be assigned, why any action is right. In this observation, you seem to be guided by a very curious observation of Calvin, in which he designs to carry the sheet anchor of his system, a great ways to the windward; or, in other words, he lays his foundation deep; and, however paradoxical or absurd his conclusions may be, his whole arch, from bottom to keystone, is well compacted and consistent. He says, when we assign the will of God as the proof of any truth, or the foundation of any duty, we assign a combination of the best of all possible reasons, even all that were present to an omniscient mind, when that truth was revealed, or that duty enjoined. Mark the object! It was to place human reason infinitely lower than the Scriptures, and prepare the way for the reception of some of his doctrines, against which, simple reason would otherwise reluctate. In a fine writer* of our own time, (and one whom I believe to be an excellent man,) I find a sentence of the following import, which I also believe to be an anchor to the windward. "That subjection to the Deity, which, we fear, is too common, in

* Dr. Channing.

which the mind surrenders itself to mere power and WILL, is anything but virtue." Now, Sir, I do not pretend to decide when doctors disagree. But do you not go too far, when you make all virtue consist in *obedience to law*, or in other words *revealed will?* May we not ask the reasons of that will? Cannot we sometimes see them? It seems to me, in your anxiety to cast off the jargon of a mass of metaphysics, you would preclude the inquiring mind from one of its noblest exercises. If God has a reason for his will, why may we not seek it, and thus join in the wise employment *of justifying the ways of God to man.* Please to explain. Yours,

HOPEFUL.

The questions of my correspondent are natural, and I had anticipated them when I penned the remarks. I think I shall satisfy him when I am understood. Be it known, then, that it is not the design of that paper to debar minds, qualified for the work, and conscious of their own weakness, from modestly inquiring into the reasons of the divine commands. This is an office favorable to piety, and to which we are prompted by the curiosity of true wisdom. But then, let a man be conscious what he is doing. As my correspondent says, he *is justifying the ways of God to man*, and not finding out the foundations of virtue. These lie too deep for any mortal to be sure he has seen them. Obligation rests not upon such

uncertain speculations. Such stars, are suns too distant to warm us. Obligation rests on the authority of our infinite King, and in our confidence in his unerring wisdom. For as Calvin has hinted, all the reasons which can be present to an infinite mind, must be more satisfactory than the *few* which occur to our own.

We might illustrate this subject by a comparison. Suppose I am walking in the field, and pick up a little flower, whose colors are new to me, and whose fragrance I have never smelt before. I ask myself, what is the use of this flower? The first thing which occurs, is its beauty and scent, and I pronounce, without hesitation, that it was made to gratify the two senses, to which it yields so much delight. But there comes along a companion, and tells me of some medical property of the plant; and if we are asked why God made it, we answer, it is probably for all the three purposes which we have discovered. It was to regale the eye, exhilarate the nostrils, and restore the body languishing with disease. But surely no man, with the least insight into nature, would venture to say that these were *all* the reasons the Creator of the world had in view, when he called into being that kind of plant. These are some of the probable reasons which lie on the surface; but millions and millions may lie concealed, to be known to other beings according to their elevation, and fully known to Him alone, who created and comprehends all. Now if

this is true of a flower, how much more of the supermaterial, all-binding, and all-embracing law of God. Whilst it excites our modest inquiries, it bows our intellectual presumption to the dust.

Perhaps it will be said, that law, being a moral subject, and addressed to the moral faculties of the soul, is more comprehensible than even a flower. It may be so as to some of its first suggested causes; but will any one pretend he has sounded all the depths of the reasons by which an infinite intelligence governs an unbounded universe?

It seems to me, that we do not make all the inferences we ought to, from the admitted fact, that there exists a divine revelation. Some sects, in profession at least, are more distinguished for their reverence for the Bible, than others; but I know no sect that reverences it enough. For only suppose that book to be an emanation from an infinite mind, and to be backed by all the reasons which can be presented to such a mind, and what a wide gulf must separate that book from all others! How deep the wisdom! how vast the views! from which its principles are drawn. Accordingly, we find that system after system has existed and passed away. Some of these systems were false, and ought to vanish. But even when they were true, they have scarcely been more permanent;—and why? Because the foundation was one superficial particle lying on the surface; it was unequal to the vast amplitude of nature. It was

setting up only one light on the long bridge, when hundreds of such would be inferior to daylight, and hardly adequate to guide our way.

For this reason, the PURITAN'S system is—and he thinks it gives a death-blow to dark-metaphysics on one side, and an idle latitudinarianism on the other—that obligation arises from bringing two quantities in comparison, the Creator on one side, and the creature on the other. For the most satisfactory account of virtue, you are not to look in the direction in which speculatists have been looking—you are not to derive it from qualities in man, or qualities in things, or qualities in virtue itself, separately speaking; but you are to see a God; a law; a dependent creature, with moral faculties; and obligation and virtue are the result of the comparison. This is an adequate foundation; there our duties will rest for ever.

At the same time, this does not preclude, for a subordinate purpose, our inquiring into *some* of the reasons of duty; into the nature of man, or virtue, or any other thing, where we can find these reasons. But then let us know what we are doing. We are picking pebbles on the shore, when a boundless ocean rolls beyond our sight.

This system, I know, strikes a death-blow to some of our popular writers, and popular systems; to Jonathan Edwards, and to Dr. Paley; to the *soul* of latitudinarianism, and to some of the cherished *limbs* of more complex creeds. As my correspondent says,

it is an anchor to the windward. But there let it hold, until the agitated church rides out the polemic storm. There let it hold; and, though mortal tongues condemn me, in God I am safe. This places the humble Christian at his Saviour's feet, and leads him to say with the immortal *Chillingworth,* "Propose to me anything out of *this book,* and require whether I believe it or no; and seem it never so incomprehensible to human reason, I will subscribe to it with heart and hand; as knowing no demonstration can be stronger than this—GOD HATH SAID SO, THEREFORE IT IS TRUE."—*Respiciam trementem sermones meos.*

THE PURITAN.

No. 26.

But Hope can here her moonlight vigils keep,
And sing to charm the spirit of the deep.

Pleasures of Hope.

A LETTER FROM A FRIEND IN ENGLAND.

Sir,

Your country is having a silent though powerful influence on ours; and I have a great curiosity to learn from some trustworthy source, the nature of your institutions. You cannot be ignorant that innovations in our region is the order of the day; and that our old relics of past ages and feudal times, are disappearing like old pillars from a temple, which some architect has taken into his hands to repair. I myself am neither a strenuous conservative nor innovator; I have not yet joined any of the political or religious parties of the day; and I wish to hit the true point of middle wisdom, whenever it can be found.

But I find that your example, in America, is having a powerful influence in all parts of Europe. It is true, it is less frequently quoted than you would suppose; but, you are aware that, in politics, the strongest objection against schemes of reformation, is derived from their alleged infeasibility; none say that they are not grand theories, fitted to captivate the youthful imagination, and roll in the declamatory periods of some popular orator. But the great question is, can they be put in practice? Are they not to be numbered with those sublime delusions, which speculation imposes on youthful minds at first, but all wise men are compelled to abandon them? This is the great problem; and this the example of your country is quoted as solving. In this way, you are having a silent influence, more powerful than that of fleets and armies; an influence like the subjacent stream, which, low in its channel, glides by the walls of some mouldering castle; whose creeping power is not suspected, until the battlements fall and the ruin is complete.

But against this influence, there are numbers who struggle. They say that the nature of your institutions is not fairly represented. Neither your constitution nor its administration are known; and still less is known the happiness or misery which your government imparts. It is said, that your government, in some respects, is republican, rather in show than reality; that sometimes it is vastly lax, and sometimes despoti-

cally coercive; that it is managed by corruption, as much or more than ours; that places are sought for with the same eagerness, and bestowed with the same partiality as among us; and as to the freedom of the press, it is asserted, on the one side, to be gross licentiousness, and on the other, greatly restricted when it resists the popular will. The impulses of your mobs are said to be more exclusive than the influence of our throne, even when defended by the decrees of the star chamber.

As to the state of religion in your country, we hear strange representations. It is said that, released from the decency and order of a legalized establishment, it is bursting out in the excesses of fanaticism, and in the wildness of ungoverned feeling. Instead of a religion, growing up from the mild principles of Christianity in the heart, and acting on a moral life, we hear of periodical convulsion; of passions substituted for reason and inflamed to excess; of the heat of enthusiasm and the cold reaction of indifference; of fire and frost; of the ebbs and flows of popular feeling; of camp-meetings and protracted meetings; scenes where religion is deformed, because decency is violated. In short, your church is represented as being broken into sects which are daily breaking into new divisions; as if the edifice of the sanctuary were crumbled into the *powder and dust of individuality;* with no unity, no consistency, and no hold on the human mind. We hear that there are whole villages,

whole regions, who are not supplied with teachers of the gospel, because their choice is left to a popular election, and there are not ten men who can agree.

In short, it is represented that both in church and in state, the cords of liberty have become so excessively loosened, that they cannot much longer hold an organized system together.

Even your manners have been assailed by some. It is said, that while the definite lines drawn by the different ranks of men among us, in which each knows his station, and is bound by prescription to keep it, prevents encroachments, and softens the jealousies and evils of competition, with you it is very different. The beggar does not even take off his hat when he asks for charity; and the servant approaches his master with a look of insolence and independence. All the civilities of life, instead of being the soft emanation of politeness and humanity, become harsh and repulsive. Social intercourse with you is a dispute for place; a jealousy of encroachment; a vain attempt to settle shadowy distinctions; and a contest between presumptuous pride and wounded modesty. Republics do not extinguish the ambition of men; but set them scrambling for indefinite shadows and visionary rewards, and are thus very unfriendly to private virtue and domestic peace.

With us, a nobleman knows his place; he knows that his rank and precedence are undisputed; and

therefore nothing remains for him, but to win the good will of his inferiors by apparent condescensions, softness of manners, and those lighter acts of friendship, which throw silken chains around collected hearts, and improve the facilities of social life. With you, it is all contest of *rough and tumble.* The rich man is austere, because he fears his prerogatives are invaded; and the poor man is soured, because he is crowded from his station, by one whom he deems no better than himself.

On the other hand, it is said by a sanguine party among us, that your experiment in giving to a whole people self-government, is eminently successful. America is represented as the home of the virtuous, and the paradise of the free; the generous nature of man is said to be there expanding under institutions, sufficiently strong to regulate, but too feeble to cramp his powers; your roughness of manners is said to be only the flashes of sincerity; and your prostrate church, is only religion freed from its outward forms, and putting on the patchwork robe, whose variegated colors only increase its beauty. Even the railing and severity which fill the electioneering articles in your papers, are represented as the flumes, through which the black waters flow away from the field and leave the soil and atmosphere healthful and pure. It is a smoke that indicates but little fire. In short, it is said, that you are the first people, who knew how to build up the edifices of liberty on their lasting foun-

dations, by trusting human nature according to the perfectibility of its powers.

My dear friend, I am no dogmatist in philosophy or religion, and I have written to you for your testimony on this subject. Write to me carefully, for your words will have a bearing on my future conduct. You will assist me, I hope, in fixing the middle point between conservative toryism, and headlong innovation. I want your *testimony*, rather than your *opinion;* still, as the one can scarcely come without some tinge of the other, I would not debar you from a free use of your pen, and full communication of your heart.

Should I say, that I pay very little attention to the representation of those travellers, whose prejudices have galled your countrymen so much, I should only convey a superfluous piece of information. But no nation exists for itself; its moral and political attraction will be felt, as certainly as, in a physical sense, our solar system would be affected, should a new planet be rolled into its compass. America is to act an important part in advancing or retarding the common welfare; and her example, bright or pernicious, will be felt in the last destinies of mankind.

Yours,

J. Fleetwood.

THE PURITAN.

No. 27.

Ten thousand follies through Columbia spread,
Ten thousand wars her darling realms invade.
The private interest of each jealous State;
Of rule the impatience, and of law the hate.
But ah! from narrow springs these evils flow,
A few base wretches mingle general wo.

Dwight to the Continental Convention.

REPLY.

Bundleborough, 1835.

Really, my friend, you have set me a severe task; your questions open a field which it would require a life to explore. You not only ask me to estimate the influence of republicanism in church and state, on our manners and social happiness, but you want a testimony, which is to modify the proceedings of the whole island of Great Britain. This is too much for one who hardly dares to adopt the responsibility of forming opinions for himself.

In our country, as everywhere else, politics and social life is a complex scene, where good and evil are mixed up in all proportions and endless variety of combinations; and I cannot wonder, that a man who has a theory to support, and has formed all his views from being under an old government, should find much to bias him against republicanism and its effects. I have no quarrel with your travellers; some of them may be honest; but most of them use an argument against us, which proves too much, and therefore proves nothing; for I put it to your conscience, my friend, if I were to come to Great Britain, and collect every moral deformity of person or proceeding, from the hovels of the highlands, to the miseries of the weavers in Spitalfields, London, as an argument against monarchy, whether I could not reason as forcibly, and with as much conviction to an honest heart? The worst argument amid all the sophisms of false logic, is a partial statement of facts.

We, like all other nations, have our advantages, and those advantages are combined with many painful abatements. Our republic, you know, was founded in irritation; our fathers, persecuted as they thought by Laud, fled from his power, to found their privileges in this wilderness; and here, all they deemed privilege, was for years a matter of contest. On the restoration of king Charles II., as you know, a quo warrant was issued to seize their charter, and Andros,

the creature of king James, they seized and put in chains. William was more popular; but even of him they obtained a charter, which did not satisfy them; and of kings they knew little, but by the contests their prerogatives could excite, and the evils their long arms could inflict. Then came the revolutionary war, when every passion was roused, every energy called forth, in which, after incalculable sufferings, they won their independence. It cannot be known to you, as it is to me, who have heard the tale from my grandfather's fireside, at what an immense expense of suffering, on our part, that conflict was maintained. It literally took the bread from our mouths; and I have heard my grandfather say, that in a scarce year, which happened during that war, he was puzzled, on some occasions, to find bread for the communion table. The officers of the American army were literally a band of gentlemen beggars; and as to the privates, their marches in winter, (and even then they were compelled to march,) could be tracked by the blood from their frozen feet. The people, therefore, deriving all their evils, as they believed, from political oppression, it is not wonderful, if they, by a natural reaction, indulged romantic expectations of blessings to arise from liberty obtained. Politics was to do everything for us; government was to be a magazine of universal felicities. Only make the people free, and secure a good constitution, and it would open a sluice-way for the

healthful waters to flow; and, like the river from the temple, seen by the prophet, we were to see the stream of virtue gush from our sanctuary, widening and deepening as it flowed, bearing on its banks, trees of every shade, and healing every wilderness through which it passed, and sweetening the dead sea of human nature, with which its drops should mingle. I can just remember the enthusiasm of that visionary day.

From these dreams, natural to our situation, we are now pretty well awakened; and we are in danger of an opposite extreme; and that is, losing sight of the real advantages of our condition. Because liberty, in the form in which we have secured it, is not worth everything, we are prone to consider it worth nothing. We are now in danger of being defeated by our own despair.

It has often been said, that a republic is practicable, if you can make the people virtuous and intelligent. But this is a loose remark; there is a class of people, which, judging on the ordinary grounds of probability, you can never expect to be virtuous. The temptations of their condition are such, as to overcome, in the average amount of cases, the average degree of human virtue. I allude to the highest and the lowest, the very rich and the very poor. These are the bane of a republic; and all its regulations should go to discourage their existence. The first are corrupted by luxury and idleness, and long for nothing so much, as to loll away their existence amidst the pleasures of

a court. They must secretly be enemies to republicanism; all their instincts are against it. The latter are debased by ignorance; they move by impulse; they are the prey of demagogues; and are so sunk in misery, that any revolution becomes agreeable to them. Now both these classes are multiplying on us, faster than I could wish. We shall preserve our republic no longer than we can continue a healthful majority of the middle class. You are aware, to preserve a forest, of which all the parts shall move in the breeze and feel the sun, the trees must be nearly as possible of a height.

I consider our country as having passed over the important line, which separates rational liberty from that excess of the principle, which may lead to self-destruction. In Massachusetts, the step was taken without noise; and no man seemed to appreciate its importance. But it is taken; and nothing now remains, but to regret it; for, in our land, there is no recession from popular privileges. In Massachusetts, previous to the last convention, two hundred dollars in property, was required, to constitute a man a voter. This, you will say, was a restriction little enough. *Now*, suffrage is universal. Every man, not a pauper, finds his way to the polls. This, taken in connection with the rapid manner in which the increasing inequalities in wealth crowd down numbers into the lowest rank, and the rapid influx of foreigners among us, draws a dark cloud over our prospects. I some-

times imagine I can hear the thunders of revolution roaring around the tomb of freedom.

The truth is, nine tenths of the questions which we debate and settle in our halls of legislation and town-meetings, are questions of *property*. The voter ought to know something of the nature of property; of its value; and he ought to know this from experience. He ought not to be an adventurer, hanging loose on society, with nothing at stake. He ought to give this proof and pledge of his being a good citizen, that he has earned something for himself. How shall a man know how to manage the interests of a town, or state, or whole nation, who cannot provide for his own household? When such men become the majority, we have reached the precipice, and nothing remains, but to plunge into the waves below.

Here, then, my friend, has been our great mistake. Universal suffrage, already, makes our vessel rock on the waves, and may prove its ruin. When it is said that virtue and intelligence, in a republic, are necessary to its existence, it must mean that we hope to preserve them within a certain circle; within the political sphere; among those whose knowledge and virtue prompt them to effort; and raise them to some degree of property. To think to make those intelligent and virtuous, who are above or below this sphere, would be contrary to all experience; and will, in the end, I fear, be found to be romance and ruin.

Still, I would not be too hasty in anticipating the

result. There are a great many things to be considered on the other side. Liberty is woven into our habits: from the parish caucus to the highest legislature, we are a debating people. There is land enough; and if some are always sinking to abject poverty, others are always rising to fill the ranks of the precious middle class. We have schools, and colleges, and books, and newspapers, in abundance. The means of popular knowledge lie on the ground around us, as the manna did around the camp of Israel. And, lastly, the present is a trying day. We have hardly yet recovered from the giddiness of independence; nor consolidated our imported population with the old into one consistent mass. We wait with hope and anxiety, for the revelations of time.

As to your own country and condition, all I should say to your warm radicals, could I be admitted to whisper in their ear, would be compressed in the old, plain proverb—*Keep in the frying-pan.* All governments are a choice of evils; and no *form*, is worth the price of a revolution.

Yours, JOHN OLDBUG.

THE PURITAN.

No. 28.

Ask me what makes one keep, and one bestow?
That Power, who bids the ocean ebb and flow,
Bids seed-time, harvest, equal course maintain,
Through reconciled extremes of drought and rain;
Builds life on death, on change duration founds,
And gives the eternal wheels to know their rounds.

Pope's Moral Essays, Epistle III., line 163—167.

In the long winter evenings which we were accustomed to spend over my grandfather's fire, I have often heard him tell the story of the family of the Packwells; and as it illustrates the alternation of wealth and poverty in the same household in New England, I beg leave briefly to repeat it.

Old David Packwell was a man who blew a fisherman's horn through the roads of Bundleborough, for nearly sixty years. It was his custom to run in debt for the necessaries of life, and for one article more necessary than all the rest—rum—as long as any one would trust him. Then he would go out on the

water and catch a fare of fishes, and sell them, to make himself, as he called it, square with the world, and prepare the way for a new stock of credit. He was a short, thick, hard, weather-beaten man, never known to be intoxicated, though he poured down his throat a constant stream of strong water, at the rate of nearly two gallons per week. In short, he was wretchedly poor, hardened to drinking, though never drunk, because the spirit had no more efficacy on his carcass, than on a well-seasoned cask. He lies buried in Bundleborough grave-yard, under a flat grave-stone, with this singular epitaph; which, what it had to do with his character, no man could ever imagine.

> The sweet remembrance of the just,
> Shall flourish when he sleeps in dust.

His son Solomon was a very different character. Old Packwell always had a notion that children should be educated well; and of education he had no other conception than sending them constantly to school. Solomon was not a very apt scholar, so far as books were concerned; he never read for amusement or information, but he was always in his place. He learned to read, write, and cypher, with decency; he was sensible, shrewd, and observing; and, above all, he had a peculiar tact at getting money. Long before the close of his schoolboy days, he had discovered the art of catching birds in a trap cage,

and carrying them into Boston and selling them; of collecting dandelions in the spring, and carrying them to the market with other vegetables, so that it was as natural for money to collect around his fingers, as it was to fly from those of his father. When he became eighteen years old, he went to Boston and began a series of exertions, which ended in the accumulation of a splendid fortune. His first business was to drive round a single-horse cart, loaded with sand, which he dealt out to families at three or four coppers the half-peck. But whatever was his occupation, he was sure to gather money, under those powerful brokers, enterprise and economy.

One anecdote has often been told of him, from which a plain, old woman, predicted his future affluence. He had brought her some sand and received his pay, when she, noticing his diligence and exertion, asked him if he would not *take something to drink;* which phrase, by the way, always, in New England, implies something more than water. It was before the temperance reformation commenced. "And, Madam," said he, "how much will this something cost you?" "Perhaps," the lady replied, "three coppers." "Well, Madam," said he, "give me the three coppers, and I will take my draught at your pump." From that time, it was foreseen that his prudence would end in wealth.

Packwell soon after accumulated capital enough to set up a wood-wharf; and here the same enterprise

and shrewdness followed him. Whether measuring sand, or cording wood, he never lost sight of the main chance. He was just a hard dealer enough to escape the character of a cheat. Some complained of him, to be sure, of buying at a wholesale price in the summer season, and selling off by the foot, or half foot, his piles, for whatever they would *fetch*. But this is the very policy of trade; and Packwell had very little to do with generosity or pity. It was about the time that the British army was in Boston, that his business was in its most flourishing state. He puzzled his head very little about the idle notions of liberty; whether the stamp act was right or wrong, he never knew; and if his wood brought him British gold, he never troubled himself about the political principles of the man to whom he sold it. Hancock deserted his house, and found, on his return to Boston, that it was torn to pieces; but Solomon Packwell staid by, and made hay while the sun shone on him. Hancock got fame, and Packwell got money.

In all the subsequent commotions, Mr. Packwell never burnt his fingers by sticking them too far into the political furnace. If he met with a warm tory, he would hear him talk; would nod and wink; would turn off his questions by some sideway remark, which meant any thing and every thing; would always profess himself a warm believer in all the truisms which no party disputed; and if he met a whig, he would

deal exactly so with him. In like manner, in Shays' rebellion; at the formation of the federal constitution; and during the hot contests which followed afterwards, though the country was in a blaze, and every man, from the lawyer to the scavinger, thought it necessary to dispute, Mr. Packwell minded his own business, and kept his eye on the main chance. He went to no caucuses, made no speeches, scarcely went to a town-meeting. The only office to which he was ever elevated, was that of fireward. Here, everybody saw he was trustworthy, because he owned a great many wooden buildings in a particular street, and so they gave him the long pole.

In the mean time, riches flowed in upon him in an increasing ratio. First, he could reckon his ten thousands, then his hundred thousands, and finally, his property rose to half a million. He now began to shine out in his dress and equipage; for, strictly speaking, he was no miser. He added to his single-horse chaise a carriage; enlarged his house; increased his furniture; and wore ruffles around his wrists. He bought him a country-seat in Bundleborough, his native town, and spent his summer months there, cracking his jokes among the farmers and mechanics. He was popular, though no man thought him a Solomon, except in his *given* name. He would never injure you, unless you made a bargain with him, and then he was sure, by hook or by crook, to get the best end of the stick.

Packwell had a large family of children, and a wife, whose history was similar to his own. Having struggled with the evils of poverty, and being somewhat deficient in the accomplishments of the circles with which they were now called to mingle, they resolved that their children should be effectually delivered from all these evils. They accordingly sent them to the best schools, i. e. the most expensive; hired private tutors for them; bought pianoes for the daughters, and whole libraries for the sons; in short, supposed themselves to be educating them, because they concluded they never could be educated enough. In the mean time, they made no small display of their wealth in the sight of these children; they were rolled in carriages, and galloped in riding-schools, and taught to expect mines of gold which never could be exhausted. Thus all the stamina of character was destroyed, and like hop-vines or pea-stems, they could only creep up with something to lean on. Strictly speaking, in all the substantials of an active character, they were not half so well educated as their parents, in their original poverty. They had no self-exertion; no self-dependence; and all they knew, was to spend the inheritance their father had acquired. Their eldest son, Harry Packwell, I remember—a boy who boasted that he could eat four biscuit, toasted, for his breakfast; and afterwards he became corpulent, and died of his own fat. The second son was prematurely put into the command of a vessel,

which he got on to the rocks and perished in her; four of the daughters married four bankrupts; the remaining daughter was a miser, who hoarded her property to be sure, and almost starved herself in a voluntary poverty; but finally she died, and her ill-kept wealth went to a host of dissipated nephews and nieces; and so ended the accumulations of the Packwell family. They are all now wretchedly poor, and may go, if they would act wisely, to their grandfather's original occupation of selling sand for their own support.

This is the round, which is run through in Boston by thousands of families. It is as regular as the ebbing and flowing of the sea. But will not men learn sometime before the millennium comes, (and they certainly will *then*,) that life was given for higher purposes than to gather wealth, and that wealth can be appropriated in a better way than to corrupt their children? "My hearers," said an Episcopal clergyman in Boston, now dead, "you might give ten thousand dollars more a year, in charity, and yet keep enough in your purses to corrupt all your posterity." The science of statistics might be applied to teach the lessons of morality.

THE PURITAN.

No. 29.

A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure.
Bacon's Essays.

Nothing is more common in the world, than to produce a false impression, without telling a lie. This is done by an intentional concealment of some part of the circumstances pertaining to the subject, which the person to whom you address yourself, has, by supposition, a right to know. I have already mentioned a case, in the conduct of my unhappy father. Poor man! His half-truths, were lies of vanity. They were poor expedients to cover over his own poverty. In every other case, he was a man of the strictest veracity. But how many are there, that keep back part of the facts in more important cases; from the drayman, who tells his partial story by the street side, to the historian, who fills his pages with mutilated representations which he knows will deceive,

until his book shall be no more! Most people deal with truth, as New England farmers paint their houses; adorning the front with the purest white, while the hinder part is slobbered over with Spanish-brown, or even covered with the rust and moss of the weather; so that a man is ashamed to admit a stranger into his back door.

This partial representation, has affected no part of literature more disastrously than biography. I am now old enough to have known some of those people, whose matchless virtues figure in books; and I must confess, that I know not one of them, of whom all the follies are told. They are generally slid over by a few barren confessions that they were imperfect; but nothing is distinctly seen; no one fault is set in its forcible light; and we survey them as a sort of human angels, rather than frail and erring men. To this fault, I am aware, there is strong temptation. For who would wound the heart of a weeping widow, or a fond son, by mentioning the imperfections of a husband and father, when their virtues are magnified by remembering affection, and every fault comes to them, softened by the twilight of the tomb!

For this reason, I have very little confidence in modern biography. It has too little truth in it, to make its narratives instructing. Not only faults are dimly shown or entirely concealed, but surviving friends are still more impatient of hearing those little ridiculous follies, which mark man as man, and give

all the truth and fidelity to the colorings of our nature. It is well that the great Johnson died without a family or relatives; we owe to this circumstance, perhaps, that best biography from the greatest of all fools—Jemmy Boswell.

In order to show the importance of the whole truth, to the knowledge of character, I shall give some account of Mr. James Background, a fellow-townsman of mine, in the remarkable village of Bundleborough; and if the reader should find the close of the story upset the beginning, I beg him to remember, it is owing to my determination to tell the whole truth.

Now I begin by solemnly declaring that Mr. Background had a great many virtues. He was a middle-sized man, of a fine shape, and a remarkably mild countenance. He almost always had a smile on his face, and his voice was remarkably sweet and winning. He was an honest man, never made a promise but what he kept, and never contracted a debt, which he was not willing to pay. Once on a time, he owed a neighbor a note of a hundred dollars; the note was lost, and the holder had no proof of its existence; but Mr. Background renewed the note without hesitation. No man could ever say that he violated his word, however the times or his interest might change. His word was as good as his bond.

Nor was Mr. Background destitute of the sympathies of our nature. He felt for the wants of the suffering, and was always ready, to the extent of his

means, to afford them relief. There was a fire in our town, and a very thrifty trader was burnt out, losing his house, shop, and all his capital. His case excited compassion; and, on the paper for his relief, Mr. Background put down the largest sum of any man in the place, according to his property. Nor was this a solitary act. To him, the hungry widow never lifted her imploring hands in vain; and he never sent the unclothed orphan away naked. That almost universal vice—avarice, was not the tyrant that domineered in his generous soul.

But he had this higher praise, that his charities were always skilfully bestowed. He was one of the wisest men in this respect, I ever knew. Like Job, the cause he knew not, he would search out; and gave in such a manner as to promote industry, and not to encourage idleness. He was charitable, not only of his money, but of his skill and time.

This worthy man was no backbiter; never gave severe characters of people, when they were not present; but was always remarkably tender of the faults of his neighbors. If he heard a slanderous story, he would always ask, how do you know it to be true? and nothing moved his indignation more, than to see the levity with which some thoughtless persons would sport with another's good name. He was ever for drawing a veil over the faults of his acquaintance, and if he could say nothing good of them, he said nothing.

He was remarkably temperate. Before alcohol was proscribed by societies, he took little or none. His table was plain; his fare frugal; his house and fences in the best order. As the stranger passed by them, he pointed and said, there dwells a wise and enterprising man.

Mr. Background was a professing Christian, and was very regular in his attendance on the ordinances of religion. His seat in the sanctuary, on the Sabbath, was filled by his presence, and his family sat beside him in decent array. He reverenced the Bible; and professed his serious belief in the great doctrines of religion; and, in most things, adorned those doctrines, by a sober life and conversation. None could say that he was a filthy-talker, or licentious, or a trifler; for his words were always few, judicious, sober, and to the point. He sent his children to school; taught them their Bible and catechism; and seemed to desire to leave his country that best of all legacies, a well-regulated family. In all these things, the life and conversation of Mr. James Background were blameless.

One thing, I would not omit, and that is, for the forty years I knew him, he never once called on the assessors, to have his taxes abated.

By this time, I am afraid the reader begins to think I am preaching a funeral sermon, and drawing the image of one of those *faultless monsters, which the world never saw.* But now comes the reverse of the medal.

Mr. Background, notwithstanding his mild face, had a violent temper, which either he could not, or would not govern; and during its paroxysms, he was a perfect Nero. He was cruel to dumb beasts, to excess. Six horses he whipped to death; and five others he injured to such a degree, as to lose half their value. The case of one poor old horse was distressing. The animal had previously been weakened by his cruelty; and he was endeavoring to make the beast draw home an overloaded cart of sand. They came to a miry place in the road; the wheel sank; the horse stopped; Background got into a passion, and beat the poor, staggering creature, already emaciated by his cruelty, until he sunk down, groaning and dying at his feet. To one of his children, it was *suspected* he gave a watery head, by a passionate blow on the side of his forehead. The physician said nothing, and his wife wept.

Such was the *whole* character of Mr. James Background. Having shown this sketch, however, to Dr. Snivelwell, our minister, he begs me to scratch out the last paragraph. He assures me the truth is not to be spoken at all times; and that trifles had better sink into oblivion. He says, moreover, if I do not learn to draw moral pictures with more discretion, I shall never be able to sell my Biographical Dictionary of living characters, which I have for twenty years, been preparing for speedy publication.

THE PURITAN.

No. 30.

These metaphysic rights, entering into common life, like rays of light, which pierce into a dense medium, are, by the laws of nature, refracted from their straight line Indeed, in the gross and complicated mass of human passions and concerns, the primitive rights of men undergo such a variety of refractions and reflections, that it becomes absurd to talk of them as if they continued in the simplicity of their original direction.

Burke's Reflections on French Revolution.

Though New England has been a place remarkable for the utility of all its designs, and the plain, common-sense character of all its inhabitants, yet it has also been distinguished for the refinement of its speculations, and the subtle, metaphysical character of some of its leading men. I can remember the time, when the discourses of the pulpit were abstruse essays, rather than sermons; and when the humblest hearers in an audience, were required to follow all the dark distinctions, which an acute head could make clear about the purposes of God, the origin of sin, the nature of moral agency, in order to their salvation.

These points were carried from the pulpit to the fireside; and nothing was more common, than to see a farmer with a spade in his hand, or a shoemaker in his leather apron, settling the nicest points in theology by the way-side, and sometimes with a success more honorable to their intellects than their hearts. Our contests with Great Britain, previous to the revolutionary war, brought up before the public mind, most of the abstractions of politics; and thus New England, from her peculiar situation, has become the land of *general principles*. Everything we do, in our associated capacity, must be the deduction from some general principle. I have known the whole country set on fire by a metaphysical abstraction, which one would think, like the sun in winter, to be too distant to warm us; and, however beautiful, might be esteemed as cold as the reflections of that same sun from a mountain of ice.

This singular union of the love of general principles, and the utilitarianism of common sense, which characterizes our land, is to be sought for in our history. When our fathers fled to this land, from what they considered as the terrors of persecution, it was the love of a peculiar system of religion, that animated their resolution, and supported their sufferings. Calvinism was, to them, the gospel; they saw its beauties in no other form; they found its consolations in no other source. Calvinism, metaphysical as it is, has always been a system, which has laid strong hold on

the hearts of those who cordially embrace it. Its very deformity to other minds, makes it more precious to them, as the mother embraces with new fervor the child, which every other mouth condemns. Besides, it was the religion for which they had suffered; and we always embrace, with peculiar ardor, the object we have reached through pain. This system was attacked by the multiplying opinions, which must be expected to arise in a growing country; and it was strongly defended by one of the most masterly minds, which our country has ever produced. Jonathan Edwards, of Northampton, had one of the clearest heads, and the most powerful intellects, that ever came down from the Sun of intellectual light, to shed a derivative beam on the most perplexed paths in the investigations of man. Whether he is right or wrong, none can deny his ingenuity and soundness of intention. Had he been born in Greece, his bust would have stood beside that of Aristotle; and temples would have been erected to his memory, and altars have smoked at his feet. But one evil has followed from his example. He has made thousands of inferior minds lovers of his abstractions; and the most general principles have become connected with the warmest emotions of the heart. So, in politics, the ardor with which we opposed the encroachments of Great Britain on our privileges, was connected with certain dogmas in politics, then first brought into popular notice; and thus it is, that our history has taught us to unite the

apparently most distant entities, the driest metaphysics, with the most popular enthusiasm; the abstractions of the mind, with the passions of the heart.

This circumstance has led me to inquire into the value of *general principles.*

In the first place, then, I would be far from saying that they are of *no* value. I find, that there is a universal propensity in all minds of all ages, and in all parts of the globe, to run up in their course of thinking into certain abstractions, which cover more ground than proper names, being confined to singulars, can. Savages, it is true, abstract less, and generalize less, than civilized people; but even they have their rude attempts towards a morality and philosophy, which is founded on general remarks. Such is the limited nature of our memories, and so rapid is the mind in tracing similitudes between different substances, that it necessarily and unconsciously runs into inclusive conceptions. We cannot find a name for all the stones we have seen, or all the trees, or flowers, or drops of dew. We include them, therefore, in a general term; which, though not so definite as a proper name, is yet found distinct enough, in most cases, to subserve all the purposes of life. If you could stop the use of general terms, which are expressive of general principles, the progress of knowledge would be retarded, and philosophy would cease.

But no sooner have we arranged things in the order of classification, than we find that every individual

object presented to our attention, has *two* sides to it; the side on which it resembles all other objects of its species or genus, and the side which marks its peculiarity, and causes it to be different from all other resembling objects. Thus you pick up a pebble on the shore; what is it? It is a stone; that is, it has certain general qualities, by which it resembles all substances called stone; it is hard, friable, incombustible, &c.; but then it has certain peculiarities which mark its species and genus; it is lime-stone, or trap, or pudding-stone, or a piece of gneiss or granite; and, lastly, it has some qualities peculiar to itself; such as its size, purity, &c. Now, in order to understand fully the object, you must learn its qualities on both sides; you must know wherein it agrees with all other stones, and wherein it differs; and this is *knowledge*, so far as human conception can go. If I can enumerate all the generic properties of any substance, and all the specific and individual differences, I know its nature with as complete a comprehension as human imperfection can be supposed to imply.

It appears, then, that a knowledge on the side of general resemblance, is but a part of the knowledge of any object, at best. If you fix your attention there, you know but in part; and in proportion as the points of resemblance on the generic side, become fewer, by knowing them, it is obvious you know less, than when they are increased.

As propositions become more general, they therefore

become less definite, because the points of resemblance on the generic side become fewer; we know less, because there is less to be known. This may be illustrated in material substances. You bring me something, sewed up in a bag, and tell me you have *a thing* there, and ask me to guess what it is? Here the expression is very general, and therefore very indefinite, and yet I have something to guide me; I know it must be of a size to be included in a bag; and I know it cannot be a liquid merely, for it must be inclosed in some vessel capable of containing liquids. But, just in proportion as you come down from your generals, you narrow the ground on which I must guess. If you say it is *a thing*, I have scarcely any clew for a conjecture; it may be fish, flesh, or bone; it may be an animal or vegetable substance; it may be earth, rock, wood, metals, wool, or silk; it may be the tooth of a man, or the tooth of a bear; and you leave my thoughts to wander over creation, only with this restriction, that it is something which you can include in your bag; it is not therefore mount Ætna, or the planet Saturn; and I must decline the hopeless task of guessing what it is. But just in proportion as you come down from your generic heights, you narrow the ground of my guessing. If you say that is the skin of an animal—why it may be the raw skin or the skin dressed, it may be fur or leather; and when you are perfectly specific, and individual, then you tell me what it is. So that with the abstrac-

tions of the mind, it is exactly different from what is, with the prospect of the eye. In the latter case, the higher you go up, the wider your landscape, and the more you see. But in generic abstractions, you must come down from your mount, or you are lost in the darkness of its top.